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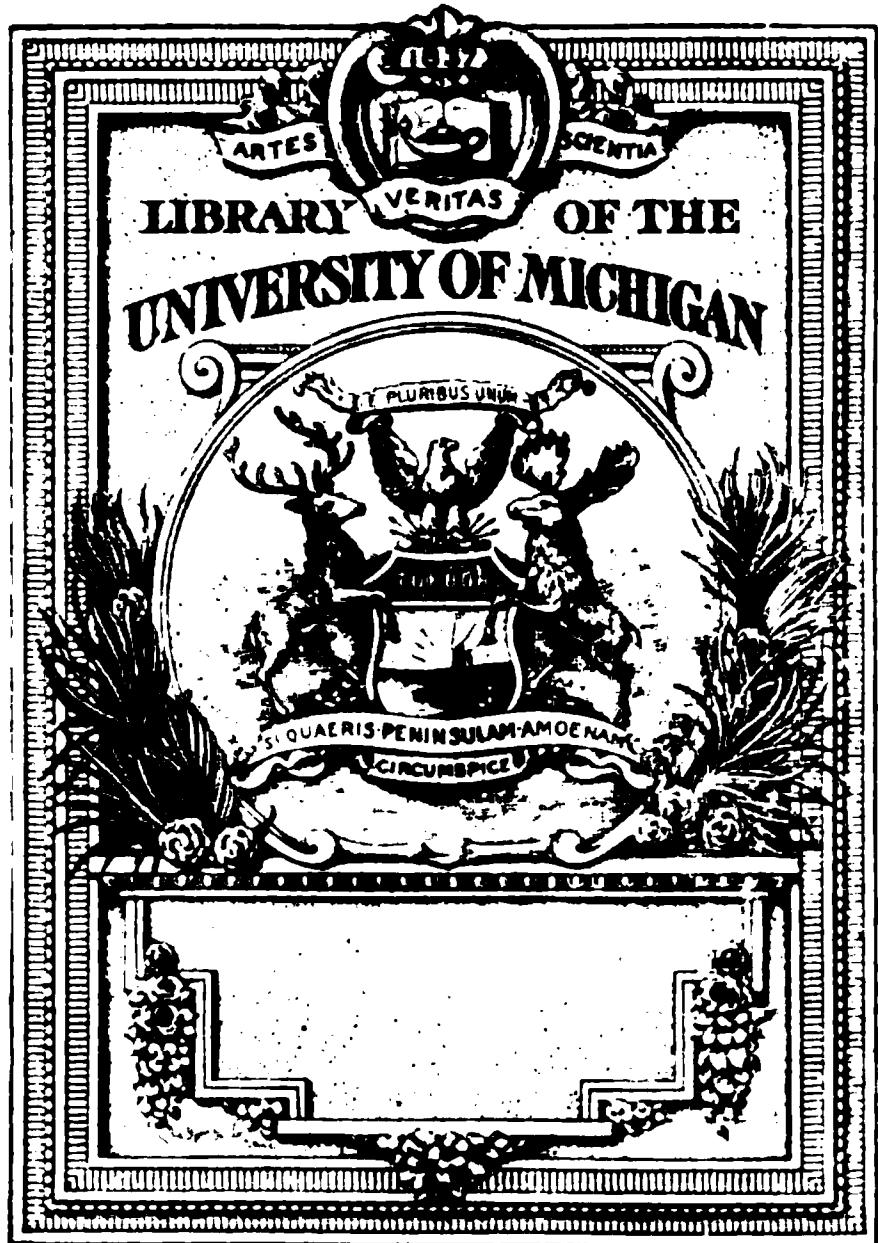
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LECTURES IN THE LYCEUM

Oxford

MORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

Aristotiles
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Lectures in the Lyceum

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OR

**ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS FOR
ENGLISH READERS**

EDITED BY

ST. GEORGE STOCK

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

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1897

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PREFACE

THIS work, it is hoped, will prove useful to the Oxford student in his studies, perhaps even to the lecturer in his lectures, since the desire to be popular has not led the writer to shirk any difficulties. But its aim is to appeal beyond a merely Academic audience to the wider circle of English and American readers, who may care to know something of the philosophy of Aristotle.

For the headings to the Lectures and for the Index of Names, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Christopher Phillips, late scholar of Brasenose College. The references to the pages have been added by my wife.

In a preface to a former work—a partial translation of the Nicomachean Ethics—I acknowledged my obligations to previous labourers in the same field.

Since then we have been presented with a revised text of that treatise by Professor Bywater and with a monumental commentary by Mr. J. A. Stewart, of which I have made much use. But there was one debt mentioned which still outweighs all the rest. It is to the late Professor Chandler, whose very words and felicitous illustrations I have used wherever

I could. In the attempt to do so I have been materially assisted by Mr. Herbert Greene, Fellow of Magdalen and formerly scholar of Pembroke College, who lent me notes taken by himself and others from the same course of the Professor's lectures which I had myself attended—now more than a quarter of a century ago. I claim it as a merit to have endeavoured to rescue something of Professor Chandler's mind from 'oblivion's subtle wrong.' But who shall recall the breadth and depth of view, the vivacity and wit of expression, the learning and yet the lightness, which lent so unique a charm to the spoken utterances of that greatest of Aristotelian scholars?

Almost at the last moment I have to thank Mr. George Holden, sub-librarian of All Souls College, for his kindness in casting his practised eye over my proofs. Mr. C. S. Jerram, of Trinity College, Oxford, has assisted me with his criticism from the beginning; and I gladly seize this opportunity of acknowledging how much I have learnt from that elegant scholar during many pleasant hours of private intercourse. If it were not for his favourable opinion and that of Mr. J. A. Stewart, of Ch. Ch., this work, which was written in the Long Vacation of 1893, might still have been withheld from the light.

8, MUSEUM ROAD, OXFORD,
March 19, 1897.

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PERSONS IN THE DIALOGUE

ARISTOTLE.

THEOPHRASTUS, his successor as the head of the Peripatetic School.

EUDEMUS, a prominent disciple, author of the Eudemian Ethics.

NICOMACHUS, Aristotle's son, who died young, and whose name has been given to the Nicomachean Ethics.

LECTURES IN THE LYCEUM

LECTURE I

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 1-3]

THE SCIENCE OF STATECRAFT: ITS AIM: ITS
EVIDENCE: ITS STUDENTS

ARISTOTLE. THE course on which we are now entering is to deal with the Philosophy of Man. Take anything that man does with head, hand, or heart—look at his sciences, his arts, his conduct and purposes—you will find that they all aim at some good. Do you doubt this? Then try to reverse the idea: try to imagine some science or art which consciously aims at evil. Why, the thing is unthinkable! We may therefore identify 'aim' or 'end' with good. Hence the Highest Good has been rightly defined as 'the aim of all things.'

Here let me pause to point out to you the differences that exist among ends.

First, there is a difference in kind. For sometimes the action is its own end, in which case we will say that the end is an 'activity,' and sometimes the end is a 'result' beyond the action itself. Thus the end of the art of riding is simply the act of riding, whereas the end of statuary is a statue. In the latter case it is evident that the result

The first question will find its answer as we proceed. To the second we may return an answer at once. As every art or science aims at some good, the Highest Good must be the object of the supreme art or science—of that which in the truest sense we may call the Master-art. That this art is Statecraft may be gathered from two considerations—

(1) If you see a number of men employed on building a house, one of them, it may be, mixing the mortar, another carrying a hod of bricks up a ladder, while a third lays the bricks in their places, and if there is one man there who takes no part in the details himself, but who assigns their work to all the rest, you conclude that he is the master-builder. Even so, when you find a science, which assigns their places to all the rest, prescribing who shall learn what, and how far the study of each science shall be carried, you may rest assured that this is the master-science.

(2) Again, if you take the other faculties which are held in the highest esteem, such as war, economy, and rhetoric, you will find that they are directly subservient to statecraft. For war aims at the safety of the state; economy at the proper management of a household, and the state is made up of households; while rhetoric, as we all know, is the means of influencing your fellow-citizens and obtaining power in a state.

Since statecraft then stands in this governing and controlling relation to the rest of the arts and sciences, it is evident that its end must embrace the ends of all the rest, so that this will be the good of man.

NICOMACHUS. May I ask, father, whether by 'the good of man' you mean the good of an individual man—the good of Coriscus, for instance?

ARISTOTLE. No, I do not. I mean the good of the community or state. It may indeed be the case, and

I incline to think it is, that Coriscus will find his own good in what constitutes the good of the community: but whether that be so or not, it is the good of the state that we are now in search of, as being the greater and more perfect good. If we can only secure the good of an individual, that is something to be thankful for: but the good of a state or nation is a nobler and diviner object at which to aim. We are approaching 'ethics,' or the science of conduct, from the side of politics, or statecraft. By the latter I mean that great practical science which has for its aim to secure the good of man. Now the good of man, in the sense in which I have explained it, of the good of the state, depends chiefly upon the conduct of individuals. Hence the science which deals with conduct is a branch of politics or statecraft.

Having settled what our aim is, and having further determined to what science it belongs to treat of it, we have now to ask—What knowledge can we expect to get with regard to it?

The sciences with which you are most familiar are those which deal with the laws of space and number. These are called 'exact' sciences, because the truths with which they deal are absolute, admit of no exceptions, and hold true equally at all times and in all places. Now the science upon which we are about to enter is not one which lends itself to an exact treatment. Ideas of right and justice, which are the subject-matter of political science, are of a nature essentially relative: no statement can be made about them which admits of no exceptions and holds true equally at all times and in all places. The fluctuating character of these ideas have led many thinkers, such as Archelaus and Protagoras, to suppose that in the nature of things there is nothing right or just, but that things are made right and just by people being agreed to think them

so, or, to put the same thing more briefly, that right and justice exist only conventionally, and not by nature. The same sort of uncertainty attaches also to the wider idea of good. Speaking in the abstract, who doubts but that wealth and courage are 'goods'? And yet how often have these goods proved the ruin of their possessors! Such then being the nature of our subject-matter, you must lay aside at starting many of your preconceived ideas of science, or rather, you must enlarge your conception of science by bearing in mind that such as the premisses are, such also must be the conclusions: if the premisses are universal and necessary, then expect conclusions of the most rigorous exactness, but if the premisses are only generalities, or things which hold true in the main, then be content with conclusions of the same kind.

And this leads me to remark that very few people know what kind of evidence to ask for, or what kind of evidence to be satisfied with. It requires education to understand that so much exactness only must be required as is in keeping with the nature of the subject. You might just as well accept an appeal to probability from a mathematician as demand demonstrations from an orator. For a man to be a good judge of any subject he must know that subject: so that to be a good judge of a particular subject, one must have been educated in that subject, and to be a good judge generally, one must have received a good general education.

It follows from what we have been saying that the young are not fitting students of our present science. For it deals with life and conduct; it is these which furnish the premisses, and it is to these that the conclusions relate. Now it is just here that the young are deficient—namely in experience of life. Experience is an essential element in wisdom, because we must have felt the force of a maxim

before we can thoroughly know it. The young man may indeed be taught moral truths just as he may be taught mathematics : but he will not realise them until they have been brought home to him by the great teacher—Life.

There is another reason which unfits the young for the study of this subject, namely, that they are liable to be led astray by passion, in which case all their pains will be thrown away. For you must remember that the science before us is not a speculative, but a practical one. The end for which we are met together now is not knowledge, but conduct. The disqualification, of which I have last been speaking, is not a mere matter of age, but rather one of temperament. Some people are, I cannot say 'young,' but 'youngish' all their lives. A man may be so at eighty, if all his pursuits are still dictated by passion. Wherever there is this lack of self-restraint knowledge on this subject is thrown away : but to those whose impulses and actions are guided by reason, nothing could be more useful than to know about these things.

Let so much serve by way of introduction. You will remember that there are three topics chiefly that have been dwelt upon—

- (1) The aim of our science—to ascertain the Good of Man,
- (2) The nature of the evidence—in proportion to the subject-matter,
- (3) The qualifications of the student—experience and superiority to passion.

LECTURE II

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 4, 5]

VARIOUS OPINIONS ABOUT HAPPINESS: IT IS NOT PLEASURE, HONOUR, VIRTUE, WEALTH

We began by saying that all knowledge and purpose aims at some good. Let us now endeavour to determine what is the good at which our science of statecraft aims, and what therefore is the highest of all goods attainable by action. We cannot begin better than by taking a glance at the opinions already held on the subject.

As to the name of this Highest Good there is a pretty general agreement. For all men, whether vulgar or refined, are content to call it happiness; and if challenged to explain what they mean by being happy, they would probably employ the familiar phrase 'to live well and to do well.' But at this point agreement may be said to cease. For if we go further into the matter, we shall find the utmost diversity of opinion, and the account of the nature of happiness which is given by the many will be very different from that of the wise. The former have a way of fixing upon some obvious and palpable feature of well-being, such as pleasure or wealth or honour, each according to his different temperament. But not only do the many differ from each other; they also differ from themselves. A man's notion of happiness is not merely a question of

character and temperament, but also of changing conditions and circumstances. If he falls ill, he thinks happiness is health ; if he is poor, he thinks it is wealth ; if he is conscious of ignorance, he thinks happiness is knowledge, and so admires any one who talks big and above his head. Perhaps—I hardly like to suggest the idea—this last fact may have something to do with the respect shown for the doctrine of a transcendental and absolute good, which is the cause of the goodness of all these lower goods. You will gather from what I have said how widely divergent are the views held on this subject. It would be superfluous to attempt to examine all of them. We will be content to take those which are most in vogue or which have some show of reason. For there are two forms of authority to which we always bow—the authority of the many and the authority of the wise. But before we go further I wish to say a few words as to the method to be pursued in our inquiry.

There are two ways open to us—

- (1) To start from first principles, and arrive at the complex results. This is the Synthetic or Deductive Method.
- (2) To start from the complex results, and work back to the first principles or causes on which they depend. This is the Analytic or Inductive Method.

Plato in his lectures used often to raise the inquiry which of these two methods it was proper to adopt in a given case, whether we should proceed from first principles or to first principles, just as in the race-course you may go from the stews to the limit or back the other way. One thing is certain, that we must begin from what is knowable. But then things are knowable in two ways. Some are more knowable—I will not say ‘absolutely,’ for all knowledge implies a relation to some intelligence, but—universally, whereas others are more knowable to us. Of the latter kind are effects as opposed to causes, phenomena as opposed

to laws, particulars as opposed to universals ; in one word things are more knowable to us in proportion as they are nearer to sense, and more knowable universally in proportion as they are farther from sense. Now the underlying principles of morality are not known to us, whereas the facts on the surface are. Therefore the analytical method of investigation is the one which should be pursued. Whatever course others may think proper to take, let us at least begin from the end of the stick which we have in our hands.

Hence you see that a right moral training is an indispensable pre-requisite for a student of what is right and just and of the subjects of political science generally. For the existence within us of certain moral sentiments is the basis of fact on which any system of morality must be built. If a man is possessed of these, and prepared to act on them, it is a luxury rather than a necessity that he should know the reason why. Such a man either has a knowledge of first principles already within himself or can easily acquire the same. As to him of whom neither of these things can be said, we can only remind him of the words of Hesiod —

' Best of men is he who thinks for himself in all things ;
He too is good in his way who takes advice from a wiser :
But he who neither thinks for himself, nor hearing another
Layeth the words to heart, is a useless fool of a fellow.'

To return however from this digression. We were about to examine the opinions which men hold with respect to happiness. Now men sometimes have one set of opinions for show and another for use. But the true opinion is declared not by what a man says, but by what he does. What a man is prepared to act on—that is the exact measure of his real belief. Hence the best way to get at men's opinions is to look at the lives they lead. Now, broadly speaking, there are three lives which men lead—

- (1) The life of enjoyment,
- (2) The life of action,
- (3) The life of thought.

There is also a fourth life—the money-getting life—but it cannot be put on a level with the rest, for reasons which will be apparent.

We will now state the ends of these different lives, and then examine the claims of each of them to be considered the highest good—

- (1) The life of enjoyment has for its end pleasure.
- (2) The life of action has for its end honour or else virtue.
- (3) The life of thought has for its end thought itself.
- (4) The money-getting life has for its end wealth.

We will not waste words on the view that pleasure, taking that term in the sense of mere physical enjoyment, is the end of life. The many, who think thus, are utterly degraded, though they may claim a shadow of justification for their view from the example of persons in high position, who do their best to imitate Sardanapalus or Smindyrides the Sybarite. But if this were the end of life, a beast would be as capable of happiness as a man. The bull in Egypt, which they worship as Apis, wallows in delights that might excite the envy of many a monarch.

Perhaps honour then may be the end of life. This is as a rule the aim of the man of action, who is of a higher type than the devotee of pleasure. But the following considerations will be found fatal to this view. Honour is lacking in two of the characteristics which we expect to find in the Highest Good—

- (1) It is lacking in security.
- (2) It is lacking in finality.

Honour is lacking in security, because, though it lies with a man himself to deserve honour, it does not lie with

himself to obtain it ; it depends upon the giver, not on the receiver. Thus honour is an external good, whereas we instinctively feel that The Good must be something personal and inalienable, something of which we cannot be deprived or defrauded through the caprices of fortune or the malice of men.

Again honour is lacking in finality, for, by men of sense at all events, it is desired, not for its own sake, but as a proof of merit. If this were not so, honour from A would be of precisely the same value as honour from B, just as a drachma is worth six obols, whether the hand it comes from be clean or dirty. But no one but a fool covets honour thus. Men prefer to be honoured by the wise and by those to whom they are known. Why by the wise? Because they are the best judges of merit. And why by those to whom they are known? Because they have the best opportunities for judging of merit.

Are we then to say that merit itself, that is, virtue, is the true end of the life of action, and consider its claim to be the Highest Good?

Virtue is certainly a claimant that deserves respectful consideration. Yet even virtue may be seen to be deficient in two respects. For suppose we had the most virtuous man of the age here among us, and were able by some exercise of power to throw him into a deep and lasting slumber, and so deprive him of all power of action—should we have at all diminished his virtue? Plainly not. And yet who would call him happy? He would no more be happy than a plant is happy, into the semblance of whose life he had subsided. Or again take the same man, and suppose him to be poor and despised, racked by anxiety of mind and pain of body. It would be the merest paradox to call such a man happy ; and yet none of these things diminish his virtue. But enough about this subject, for

it has been adequately treated even in the ordinary curriculum.

The consideration of the life of thought and its end we will postpone to a later period of these lectures. Let it suffice to say now that life is like the Olympic games. Most people come to enjoy themselves ; there are many who come to buy and sell and make profit ; some come to contend for honour ; a few come merely to survey the scene—and these are the nobler portion.

As to the money-getting life, that is no life at all. For by 'life' we mean the way in which a man directs his energies when he is free to direct them as he pleases. You must therefore presuppose freedom from necessary cares as the condition of life. So long as a man is engaged in a struggle to amass the means of subsistence, he has not begun to live at all. As for those who deliberately make wealth the aim of their efforts beyond what their needs require, they are mistaking the means for the end. Wealth is valuable only for the things it can procure you ; and these are pleasure to the extent of your capacity for enjoyment and honour—from fools. It will not procure you the higher goods of wisdom and virtue. Wealth, therefore, is manifestly on a lower level than the other ends that have been mentioned. They *are* loved for their own sakes, and yet even they, as we have seen, are not in the highest sense ends, in spite of all the arguments that have been laid down to prove them so. So here we quit this subject.

LECTURE III

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 6]

HAPPINESS IS NOT A PLATONIC IDEA

IT is now incumbent upon us to consider the philosophical doctrine of an absolute and transcendent good. All other goods, it is maintained, are but shadows and imitations of this. It exists in them all, in a sense, being the common quality which makes them good ; but it exists also apart from them, not in the world of sense, but in the world of mind—the world of absolute reality. Not only is this doctrine abstruse and difficult in itself, but the task of criticizing it is rendered still more uphill work to us by the fact that it owes its origin to those for whom we entertain so high a regard. But though Plato is dear, yet truth is dearer still ; and though we are bound by ties of piety and reverence to a master, yet the sanctity of our obligation to reason outweighs even these. What else is meant by calling ourselves philosophers, or lovers of wisdom, but that we are ready to sacrifice all for truth ? I will therefore not flinch from declaring my own opinion on this subject, as indeed I have often done before both to public audiences and to the inner circle. That opinion amounts briefly to this—

(1) That the existence of an 'idea,' not of good only,

but of anything else whatever, is a mere logical fiction without anything real to correspond to it.

(2) That, even if the ideas existed ever so much, they would have no bearing upon life and practice.

This opinion must of course be supported by reasoning ; and as some of the arguments I shall have to adduce involve a reference to the Categories, I must begin by reminding you of that doctrine, although it belongs properly to the course on Dialectic.

Any uncombined expression then must signify either substance, or quantity, or quality, or relation, or place, or time, or position, or state, or doing, or suffering. As rough instances we may take—of substance ‘man,’ ‘horse’ ; of quantity ‘two cubits,’ ‘three cubits’ ; of quality ‘white,’ ‘grammatical’ ; of relation ‘double,’ ‘half,’ ‘greater’ ; of place ‘in the Lyceum,’ ‘in the market’ ; of time ‘yesterday,’ ‘last year’ ; of position ‘lying,’ ‘sitting’ ; of state ‘shod,’ ‘armed’ ; of doing ‘cutting,’ ‘burning’ ; of suffering ‘being cut,’ ‘being burnt.’

These then are our ten categories—

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Substance. | 6. Time. |
| 2. Quantity. | 7. Position. |
| 3. Quality. | 8. State. |
| 4. Relation. | 9. Doing. |
| 5. Place. | 10. Suffering. |

Having premised so much, I now proceed to give the arguments which I conceive to be fatal to the doctrine of ideas.

(1) The inventors of that doctrine did not contend that there could be a common idea of things of which you could predicate ‘before’ and ‘after,’ e. g. numbers. For the idea being common to all the things, and yet apart from them, must necessarily be prior to them, so that you would then have something which is before the first. For instance, we

call 2 the first multiple : but if 'multiple,' which is predicable of it, as well as of 4, 6, 8, 9, &c., exists apart from it, as it is maintained that an idea does, then the first multiple must cease to be called such, since the idea 'multiple' is a multiple, and is necessarily prior to 2, for if you take away the idea, all the things which depend for their existence upon it must go too.

Now good is predicable not only in the category of substance, but also in others, each as quality and relation ; and substance is evidently prior to relation, which may be regarded as a sort of side-growth and accident of being. There cannot therefore be any idea which is common to goods under these two categories, since they differ in respect of before and after.

(2) Again good is predicable in just as many ways as being. Thus it is predicable in the category of—

Substance, as God and mind ;
Quantity, the moderate ;
Quality, the virtues, e.g. justice ;
Relation, the useful ;
Place, the 'habitat' or fitting abode of any creature ;
Time, opportunity ;
Position, comfortable ;
State, good condition ;
Doing, teaching ;
Suffering, being taught.

But if all good were one, then it would be predicable only in a single category.

(3) Again it is maintained that when things fall under one idea, the knowledge of them is also one : so that if there were an idea of good, there would be but one knowledge of all good. But as a matter of fact there are several branches of knowledge connected even with such forms of good as fall under the same category. Thus take 'opportunity'

under the category of time, it is generalship which deals with it in war, but the art of medicine which deals with it in illness; or take 'the moderate' under the category of quantity, the knowledge of it in relation to food is again the art of medicine, but in relation to exercise, it is gymnastic, or the art of the trainer. We see then that the knowledge of good, instead of being one, is infinitely various.

(4) One may fairly raise an objection also against their use of the term 'very-so-and-so.' They talk of the very-man, for instance, as something immeasurably superior to any ordinary man such as we know of. And yet the definition of man must apply equally to both, for in respect of mere manhood, which is all that the idea contains, there will be no difference between this very-man and a man of common clay.

THEOPHRASTUS. Surely I have heard the followers of Plato maintain that the very-man is eternal and imperishable, whereas the particular human being is fleeting and transitory, and that this constitutes a difference in kind between the idea and its copy.

ARISTOTLE. I am aware that they maintain this. But I deny that time in its presence or absence can affect the nature of things. The alabaster which lasts for a myriad of years is no whiter than the snow which melts with the spring-time; and similarly the eternity of the idea of man or of the idea of good does not bestow upon them more humanity or more goodness.

(5) The very method of proof which is adopted with regard to the doctrine of an Absolute Good exposes it to a suspicion of unreality. For that proof is based on the properties of numbers. Starting from the identity of the One and the Good, they argue that numbers, which are combinations of units, must have good inherent in them, and so proceed to prove the goodness of things other than

numbers, such as justice and health, which display the same properties of order and unity and rest. This method of proof is in the strict sense of the term preposterous. From numbers, which can only be admitted to possess good, they establish the goodness of things which are admitted to be good. Whereas they should start from the admitted goodness of things like health, strength, and temperance, and proceed to argue *a fortiori* that as these exhibit the characteristics of order and rest, therefore goodness must be still more inherent in numbers which exhibit the same characteristics in a less diluted form ; from this the final step would be to the identity of the One and the Good. Let me put the same thing more briefly. As a matter of fact they argue thus—

Order and rest are good,
 ∴ Justice and health are good.

Whereas they ought to argue thus—

Justice and health are good,
 ∴ Order and rest are good.

The Pythagoreans, from whom so much of their thought and phraseology is borrowed, did not make this mistake. They subordinate unity to good, not good to unity. And Speusippus seems to have followed them in this : so that he turned his predecessor's doctrine clean inside out.

NICOMACHUS. May I ask, father, what is this doctrine of the Pythagoreans to which you have just referred ?

ARISTOTLE. I was referring to their parallel series of contraries, in which unity figures on the side of good. They made out the following ten pairs of contraries—

finite	infinite
odd	even
one	many
right	left
male	female
rest	motion

straight	crooked
light	darkness
square	oblong
good	evil

(6) As for their proof that One must be the Absolute Good, since all numbers would be one if they could, unity being the goal of their desire, I will simply call it—hazardous. It is not explained how numbers desire unity, nor how feeling and impulse can be ascribed to things which have no life. They ought surely to have concentrated their efforts on proving this, instead of assuming as an axiom what would be difficult of belief, even if it were demonstrated. And the wider assertion which is connected with this, namely, that all things aim at some one good, is simply not true: for everything aims at its own good, the eyes at sight, the body at health, and so on. We therefore will not set out on a wild-goose chase after the Absolute Good, but will confine ourselves to that good at which our own science aims, just as gymnastic confines itself to a good condition of the body. I have given you now some of the difficulties which attach to the doctrine of ideas—sufficient, I think, to dispose of it, though they might be multiplied further, if this were the time for doing so.

EUDEMUS. I should like to put in a word, if I might do so without being deemed guilty of presumption. You have taught us on other occasions to distinguish broadly between two kinds of goods, the essential and the non-essential or useful. Of the former kind, you said, were all such goods as are pursued and loved for their own sakes, and of the latter kind all such as are held to be good merely because they are conducive to these, or because they tend to conserve them or to remove their contraries. Thus health is good in itself, but exercise is good because it tends to promote it, and even physic may be called good in so far

as it removes illness. Now I think the Platonists would not go so far as to maintain that all good is one, but would be content with the position that all essential good is one.

ARISTOTLE. Your objection is well taken, and I am quite ready to argue the question on this narrower basis. Among essential goods I suppose we are to put such things as wisdom, and sight and pleasures of a certain kind, and honours: for although we desire all these things as means to something beyond them, we also desire them in and for themselves. But if these are admitted to be essential goods, and it is maintained that they are one, it will have to be shown what is their common definition, just as it might be shown what is the common definition of whiteness in snow and white lead. But I believe it is impossible to get hold of any conception which shall apply alike to honour, wisdom, and pleasure, and that these things differ essentially as goods from one another.

On the other hand, if it be denied that these are essential goods, there will be no essential good left but the idea itself, so that the division becomes merely formal, one of the two members not being a real class. In that case our point is proved; for we cannot well have an idea of essential goods, if there are no essential goods to have an idea of. Thus, you see, I put our friends the Platonists on the horns of a dilemma. Either there are several things that are good in themselves or only the idea. If they adopt the former alternative, I challenge them to produce the common definition; if they adopt the latter, the discussion becomes nugatory.

EUDEMUS. But does not unity of name imply unity of nature? Are we to believe that pleasure and wisdom and honour have come to be called by the same name *by accident*?

ARISTOTLE. No, you need not believe that. For there

are at least three ways in which things may come by a common name without having a common nature—

- (1) By coming from the same source.
- (2) By tending to the same end.
- (3) By analogy.

We call gold, apes, and cinnamon by the same name 'foreign produce,' simply because they all come from outside, not because they have any essential resemblance.

Again we call oars, javelins, boatswain's pipes, and onions by the same name 'stores of war,' merely because they tend to the same end.

Or, without things tending to the same end, we may still call them by the same name, if they tend to similar ends. Thus the leg of a table is so called in virtue of its resemblance in function to the leg of a man. It stands in the same relation to the table as the leg of a man does to him. This is what I mean by 'analogy.' It may possibly be in this third way that all essential goods come to be called by the same name—

As sight : the body :: intellect : the soul ;

As health : the body :: virtue : the soul ;

and so on in other cases. But it is not our present business to determine this point, which is much more a question of logic than one of ethics or politics. Our science, by whatever name you call it, is concerned only with a good that is practical and attainable by man, not with the good of some higher being. And therefore, as I said at starting, the idea of good, if it existed ever so much, would have no relation to us.

Even if you drop the transcendence of the idea, and maintain only the immanence, the same thing may be said. For if we conceive of the Absolute Good, only as what is common to all goods, there can be nothing in it but what is present also in the least of those things which are

acknowledged to be goods. But does any art—does medicine for instance—concern itself with such a pale, generic good? Does it not rather confine itself to its own full-blooded, concrete good—health?

THEOPHRASTUS. I have heard the Platonists contend that though the Absolute Good may be beyond man's reach, yet if we keep it before the mental eye as a pattern, we shall better understand what is good for us, and therefore shall be more likely to attain it.

ARISTOTLE. I grant the plausibility of that contention, but it rests on a confusion of thought between the Platonic idea and an artistic ideal. There is no resemblance between the two. The former is the most abstract, the latter the most concrete thing in the world, being the individual carried to the highest pitch of perfection. If the idea could serve this useful purpose, it is strange how all arts conspire to neglect it. For while all aim at some particular good, and endeavour to supply the deficiencies of nature—which I conceive to be the function of art—within their several spheres, they none of them take any account of the Absolute Good, and do not seem to be aware of its existence. And they are right to leave it thus alone. For indeed it is difficult to see wherein a weaver or carpenter will be helped in his craft from a knowledge of this absolute good, or how a man will be made a better doctor or a better general for having gazed upon the abstract idea. So far from attempting to do this, the doctor does not even study health in the abstract, but the health of man, or rather the health of an individual: for his practice is directed to particular cases. We will therefore venture to imitate the arts in this wholesome neglect of the Absolute Good, and if I employ that term myself, you must understand me to mean by it a good that is absolute enough for all practical purposes, namely, the

aim of human actions. This is the cause of all other goods in a real sense, as we have seen already ; and to this, therefore, we will confine ourselves. So much then for this subject ; and so much also for the destructive side of our inquiry. For so far we have only seen what happiness is not—that it is not bodily pleasure, or honour, or virtue, or wealth, or participation in the idea of good. It still remains to find what it is ; so that in our next lecture we shall enter on the constructive side of the argument.

LECTURE IV

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 7]

DEFINITION OF THE GOOD OR HAPPINESS: HAPPINESS IS AN ACTIVITY OF THE SOUL IN ACCORDANCE WITH VIRTUE IN A PERFECT LIFE

THE result of our investigations so far has been merely to show us that good is different in different cases. In medicine it is health, in war victory, in house-building a house, and so on. Can we then give any general account of it at all? Yes, we can always describe it generally as the end of particular actions. So the question comes back to this—‘Is there any end of all our actions?’ If there is, this will be the practical good of which we are in search.

NICOMACHUS. Is it conceivable, father, that there should be more than one good which answers this description?

ARISTOTLE. I think not. The characteristics of the Highest Good are such as necessarily imply unity. We shall not be without authority if we postulate of it these two attributes—

(1) It must be final, i. e. we must desire nothing beyond it.

(2) It must be self-sufficing, i. e. we must desire nothing beside it.

When we talk of a good as being final, we mean that it is pursued for its own sake. Of course a good may be

so far final as to be good in itself, and yet at the same time subserve some higher good: but that only is absolutely final which is always pursued for its own sake, and never for the sake of anything else. We may therefore from this point of view distinguish goods into three classes—

- (1) Ends only;
- (2) Ends and means;
- (3) Means only.

To the first class belongs happiness: for we do not desire happiness in order that we may have other goods, but we desire other goods in order that we may be happy. To the second class belongs the bulk of things which are ordinarily considered to be good in themselves, such as honour, pleasure, and moral and intellectual excellence: for we desire these things as means to happiness, though we might still choose them for their intrinsic excellence, even if we could suppose them deprived of that reference. To the third class belong things which no one would choose for their own sakes, such as wealth, flutes, and instruments generally.

When we talk of a good as being self-sufficing, we must not be understood to mean merely what is sufficient for an individual living a kind of hermit life. For man, you must remember, is a social being, more so than a bee or any gregarious animal. The very structure of his mind shows that he is meant to move in society, and to consider him apart from this, his natural element, is like considering a fish apart from water. It is necessary therefore, even in considering the happiness of an individual, to take some account of his parents and children, of his wife, of his friends and fellow-countrymen generally. It is true that we must draw the line somewhere; we cannot extend our view backwards, up the whole line of ancestry, or forwards, down the whole line of descendants, or widen

it out like a circle from friends to friends of friends and their friends, for, if so, we should go on for ever. But the question of where to draw the line may be neglected for the present. Let us content ourselves now with defining our notion of the self-sufficing. It is *that which by itself makes life choiceworthy and in lack of nothing*. This is pre-eminently a characteristic of happiness.

To the two attributes which we have already postulated in happiness we may add a third, which follows from them by way of corollary, namely, that happiness stands in a class by itself. It is not *a* good, but *the* good. For if it were a good, which could be reckoned along with other goods, such as virtue, intellect, health, strength, beauty, and so on, then happiness *plus* the very least of these would be better than happiness *per se*, and so would cease to satisfy our definition of the self-sufficing. It is therefore nonsense to talk of 'health and happiness,' for without health you cannot have happiness. Happiness is the outcome of the combination of all lower goods.

But, after all, to say that happiness is final and self-sufficing, does not advance us very far on our way towards obtaining a clear idea of its nature. These statements are so true as to amount to truisms. Let us seek for some more pregnant conception.

If you were to ask me what is the good of a pen, I would say 'to write,' because this is the work of a pen. A pen is a lifeless thing, but the same conception may be extended to things with life. If you were to ask me what is the good of a flute-player, I would say 'to play the flute'; and generally we may say that the good and well-being of any artist, as an artist, lies in the performance of his work. Perhaps then we shall best understand the good of man, if we can fix upon the work of man. By the work of anything I mean that which can be done best,

or only, by that thing. But first in order comes the question whether man has a work.

I do not think this first question really need detain us. For it is inconceivable that Nature, which has assigned to everything else its proper work, should have left man without a work, and created him to idleness. But for form's sake I will give you two arguments, which appear to establish the point.

(1) Every man in his particular capacity has a work to do, the carpenter to make furniture, the shoemaker to make shoes, &c.

∴ Man in general has a work to do.

(2) Every part of man has a work to do, the eye to see, the ear to hear, &c.

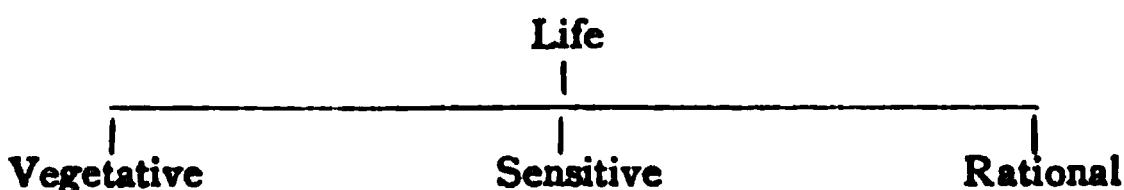
∴ Man as a whole has a work to do.

Thus by the analogy of the individual and of the part we prove that man has a work to do.

The next question then is—What is this work? In discussing it you will bear in mind the definition that we have given of work, and will not look for the work of man in anything that can be done equally well by lower forms of being.

Now man has an outer and an inner side. The outer side we call the body, the inner side we call the soul. But when we talk of 'man' at present we mean the soul, not the body. Now the work of the soul is manifestly life of some kind or other. But the question is—Of what kind?

We may distinguish three forms of life, or three different grades among the manifestations of the powers of the soul. There is the vegetative life, the sensitive life, and the rational life.



Man is a plant, but he is a plant that has awokened, and can feel and move, whereas his fellow-vegetables are chained to their places. He is a plant and something more, but still he is a plant. We cut our hair and clip our nails just as we prune the luxuriance of a vegetable growth. Now the work of a plant is simply to take in nourishment and to grow. This cannot be the work of man, since it can be done as well or better by the trees. No man need be proud of his stature when he considers how vastly he can be surpassed in the matter of growth by a mere vegetable. We may therefore set aside the vegetable life as having nothing to do with the peculiar work of man.

Next comes the sensitive life.

Man is an animal, but he is an animal that has attained to the knowledge of good and evil. To express these ideas, in the various forms of right and wrong, just and unjust, expedient and inexpedient, he is endowed with rational speech, whereas the lower animals are only capable of inarticulate noises, indicative of feelings of pleasure and pain. They are impelled by these feelings to the pursuit or avoidance of particular things: but man alone is capable of action, that is, of consciously adjusting his behaviour to the attainment of some distant end. He is an animal and something more, but still he is an animal, and deep down in his nature you will find that he is dominated by the animal desires to seek pleasure and to shun pain. Nevertheless it cannot be in the merely physical life that we are to look for the special activity of man as man: for in this life he is equalled or surpassed by the horse and the ox and living creatures generally. We may therefore separate off the sensitive life also, as having nothing to do with the peculiar work of man.

We are left then with the rational life.

But here we must distinguish between the actual and the

potential life of reason. A being may be possessed of reason, and yet not exercise it. This is the case with a man when he is asleep or in a trance. Now it is not the mere possession of reason, but the exercise of it, that constitutes the work of man. Epimenides was a great philosopher, and possessed of the rational life in the highest degree: but no one would maintain that he was happy for the half century or more during which, as the story runs, he was asleep in a cave. That was so much time subtracted from either happiness or misery. The work of man, therefore, in which happiness lies, may be said to consist in the *exercise* of the mental faculties. We will call it 'an activity of the soul.'

But the same work, we must remember, may be done well or ill. A man may exercise his mental faculties amiss, and this will not bring him happiness, any more than the good of a harper is shown by his playing the harp badly. The harper must play the harp well, and man must exercise his faculties aright. We must therefore say that happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. Or, if we consider that there is more than one kind of virtue, then we must say that happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with the best and most perfect virtue.

This might do as a definition of happiness, if man were independent of external conditions. But since happiness can only be realised in life, it is plain that life is indispensable to happiness. A man may be virtuous, and may exercise his virtue, but if he is cut off in the prime of his days, we do not talk of happiness in connexion with him. Rather his virtue increases our sorrow. Now the happiness of others does not cause sorrow, except to the envious. Not life then merely, but a full and complete term of life is necessary to the idea of happiness. For as one swallow does not make spring, nor yet one day of sunshine, so neither one day nor any short time makes a man blessed

and happy. We therefore define happiness as *an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue in a perfect life.*

Let this suffice for a sketch of the Good. If we have the outlines right, we can fill in the details at our leisure, just as an artist proceeds to bring out the joints and muscles after he has first got a correct outline of the human figure. Others too may aid us in the task, if only the first step has been rightly taken. For, as the poet says, 'Truth is the daughter of Time.' Mere lapse of time indeed brings nothing new to light, but human effort continued through time at length discovers all things. This is how the improvements in the arts have been effected. Somebody first strikes out a bold idea, and then the ingenuity of successive wits is applied to the elaboration of it.

Let me remind you at this point of a remark which I made before, but which I deem so important that you must not be surprised if I should even recur to the same subject hereafter. It was this—that the same degree of exactness must not be looked for in all departments of inquiry alike, but in each in proportion to the subject-matter, and so far as is appropriate to that particular branch of knowledge. The carpenter and the geometer have both to do with the right-angle, but the former is content if he gets it correct enough for his T-square, whereas the latter has an inexhaustible curiosity about its nature and properties. Now our science is not a speculative but a practical one. There are many subjects which we may have to touch, but which we shall not be able to go into, for fear the by-work should exceed the work. Neither is it possible to ask the reason why in all cases alike. We must often be content with the fact, as in the case of first principles. Now the fact constitutes a starting-point and first principle. For it is the non-existence or indiscernability of the reason why that makes a thing to be a first principle. The moment

you give a reason for it, it ceases to be so, and the reason given takes its place. So that to challenge first principles is to become involved in an infinite regress. The very possibility of reasoning therefore implies truths that are known prior to all reasoning.

THEOPHRASTUS. May I ask how are first principles known?

ARISTOTLE. Some by induction, some by perception, some by habituation, in fact different principles in different ways.

THEOPHRASTUS. Are there any other ways besides those you have now mentioned?

ARISTOTLE. No, I spoke loosely, and, as a matter of fact I have already mentioned more first principles than there can possibly be. For look at the matter in this way. All reasoning must be either inductive or deductive, by which I mean that the conclusion must either be wider than the premisses or not. Now the first principles of deduction are general truths, which are arrived at by induction; and the first principles of induction are particular facts, which are arrived at by perception. All first principles therefore must be arrived at either by induction or by perception: there is no room for any third kind. Let me illustrate my meaning by an example. 'Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another' is assumed as a first principle in geometry. If we ask for its evidence, we are stepping outside the science of geometry, and can only fall back upon induction, or the bringing in examples of particular numbers and magnitudes, in which we know it to be true. But how do we know it to be true in these particular cases? Why, we see it to be so, and there's an end of it.

When I spoke of first principles being arrived at by habituation, I was referring to moral truths, which are not intellectually apprehended at all. You train a child to act

in a certain way, just as you train a plant to grow. Reason may come later and supply the reason why, but you want the right moral training first as the condition of the successful development of reason.

For us at present, however, the definition of happiness at which we have now arrived, may be considered the starting-point and first principle of our inquiry. Let me beg you to consider it carefully. For if it be correct, a great advance has already been made. 'Well begun is half done,' as the saying has it. There are a great many questions which are sure to present themselves in the course of the inquiry, which we shall be able to dispose of by a mere reference to our own definition.

LECTURE V

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 8, 9]

THIS DEFINITION INCLUDES ALL OTHERS : HOW HAPPINESS IS ATTAINED

IN the last lecture we established our definition on grounds of reason. Now we will seek to confirm it on grounds of authority. And this, let me observe, is the proper way in which to employ the appeal to authority. Authority can have no force to override arguments from reason : it is itself simply the reason of others. Hence there is no authority in mathematics, since the direct appeal to reason is open alike to all. But in more obscure subjects, where the facts are more difficult to get at, it greatly strengthens the conviction with which one holds a conclusion to find that others have arrived at the same conclusion before one. The proper place therefore for the argument from authority is at the close of a discussion, since it has power to reinforce, but not to supersede, reason.

Now authority, as I have had occasion to remark before, is of two kinds—

- (1) The authority of the few wise ;
- (2) The authority of the many, whether wise or foolish.

The latter kind of authority has not been sufficiently recognised. It is chiefly displayed in proverbs and maxims

and popular sayings, and also in language itself, which is the record of all men's thoughts. Such things always repay examination. For though an opinion which is very widely held is often ridiculously false, yet, depend upon it, there is a truth at the bottom of it, to account for its general acceptance ; and this grain of truth it is always worth our while to seek for, even if it lie hid in a bushel of error. We will, therefore, again review the opinions that are held on the subject of happiness, taking account of the popular as well as of the philosophical. Before we arrived at our own conception of happiness we did this with a view to showing the inadequacy of current opinions : we will now do so with a view to showing that, as far as they go, they agree with our definition. In this way we shall increase our own belief in its truth. For in proportion as a proposition agrees with all others on the same subject, or in other words, escapes contradiction, there is an increasing probability that that proposition is true. All facts harmonize with the truth, whereas the truth is soon found to be at discord with falsehood.

First, then, for the authority of the many.

(i) Everybody agrees in arranging goods into the following three classes—

- (1) Goods of the soul,
- (2) Goods of the body,
- (3) External goods.

This is an opinion which is venerable for its antiquity, and which enjoys the assent also of the philosophers. Plato uses it in his *Laws*, and it is assumed by Socrates in the *Gorgias* ; we ourselves also have had occasion to employ it when addressing popular audiences on the subject of the best life. Now in this division you will observe that goods of the soul are put highest. Well, this agrees with our definition : for that makes happiness essentially a good of

the soul—not a good of the body, nor yet an external good ; for external goods are mere potentialities, whereas we made happiness to consist in activity or actuality.

(ii) Again, nothing is more common on the lips of the multitude than the saying that 'the happy man lives well and does well.' But this is just about what our definition comes to. For when we speak of 'an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue,' then you have doing well, and when we add 'in a perfect life,' then you have living well.

Turning now to the more explicit opinions of the wise, we shall find that our definition leaves room for the various things that other philosophers have contended for as being essential to happiness. Take the following five views—

- (1) That happiness is virtue ;
- (2) That it is wisdom ;
- (3) That it is a kind of philosophy ;
- (4) That pleasure is an essential ingredient ;
- (5) That external prosperity is indispensable.

(1) You have our friends the Cynics, who would rather be mad than feel pleasure, saying that happiness is virtue. Well, we say so too ; only that we improve upon their statement. For while they say merely that it is virtue, we say that it is the exercise of virtue. There would be nothing on their showing to prevent the virtuous man from being happy, if he were asleep or in a swoon, whereas we say that a man must act virtuously, if he is to be happy. At Olympia they do not single out the handsomest and strongest men, and confer the prize upon them, without their entering the lists ; and even so no amount of the passive possession of virtue will entitle a man to the prizes of life : he must use his virtue, if he is to win the crown of happiness.

(2) Socrates was wont to identify wisdom with happiness. The body, he thought, depended for its good on the soul,

and the rest of the soul depended for its good on wisdom. Even moral and intellectual excellences, he maintained, might conceivably be productive of evil, if they lacked the right direction which was supplied by wisdom: so that wisdom was the one thing which was always and invariably good. Now we shall find as we go on that virtue and wisdom are inseparable from one another. But happiness depends upon virtue. Therefore happiness depends upon wisdom.

(3) Anaxagoras deemed happiness to be an affair of philosophy rather than of practical wisdom. When he was asked what made life worth living, he replied, 'To contemplate the heavens and the order of the whole universe.' Though it is anticipating things rather, I may as well tell you now that we shall in the end see reason to agree with Anaxagoras in his conception of happiness, as far at least as concerns the individual on the divine side of his nature. And there is nothing in our definition to exclude this view, nay rather, we have expressly allowed room for it. For Anaxagoras made happiness to consist in contemplation or thought, and thought is the exercise of the highest virtue, which for want of a better name we shall call 'philosophy.'

(4) But there are those who maintain that virtue and wisdom and philosophy are all very well for those who like them, but that, if you do not like them, that is, if they are divorced from pleasure, they cannot constitute happiness for you. And there is a great deal of force in what they say. It would seem then that a compromise must be effected, as indeed we find done in the *Philebus*, between the Socratic doctrine that happiness is wisdom, and the vulgar view that it is pleasure. Neither the one nor the other by itself is able to satisfy the requirements of the Highest Good, as being final, adequate, and choiceworthy to all. But it is only in idea that we can disjoin the two:

they cannot be separated in reality. For what you love you must needs delight in. As horses are a joy to the man who likes horses, and a sight is a joy to him who is fond of sightseeing, so virtue is a joy to the lover of virtue. And it is here that true pleasure is to be found. For lower delights are pleasant to some but not to others—men's tastes may differ with regard to them—but virtue is pleasant in itself. A difference of tastes is a sign of a perversion of nature. Two wholly normal and natural minds would agree in the pleasantness of virtue. So that virtue is pleasant both relatively to the good and absolutely, or in itself. Therefore we do not need pleasure to be added to the life of virtue, in the way you might put on an amulet, for that life has pleasure inherent in itself.

EUDEMUS. May we not conceive a man living the life of virtue because he considers that it is right to do so, and yet finding no pleasure in it?

ARISTOTLE. We may conceive him acting like a virtuous man, but I deny that such a man would be virtuous. Would you call a man generous who gave without liking it? Or would you call a man just who did justice against the grain. Such men are on their way to becoming just and generous. If they go on acting as they are doing, they will get to like it : for pleasure is a mental affection that inevitably associates itself with our habitual pursuits, so that as an act becomes habitual, it tends to become pleasurable. And as virtue is only virtue when it has become a fixed habit, it follows that virtue is only virtue when it is productive of pleasure. So that virtuous actions are necessarily pleasant. Aye, and they are also good and noble, and each of these in the highest degree, if the good man judges rightly about them, and he judges as we said. Happiness therefore is the best and noblest and pleasantest thing, and these attributes are not severed, as the Delian inscription has it—

'Noblest is justice, best is health entire;
But sweetest 'tis to gain the heart's desire.'

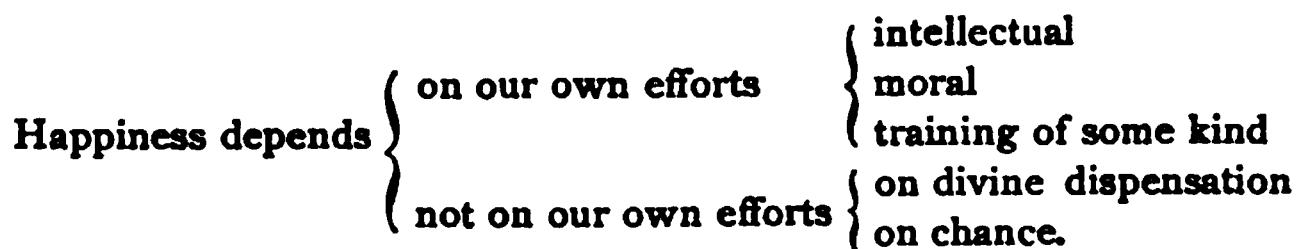
For all these attributes are comprehended in the best activities; and it is these, or the one best of these, that we declare happiness to be.

(5) But then they say that external goods are indispensable; and so they are. Thus we are always brought down from our flights by the crass conditions of matter. For though it be disagreeable to the pride of the philosopher to confess it, we must nevertheless face the fact that we are to some extent in the hands of Fortune. We need an outfit for the drama of life: for it is impossible, or, at any rate, not easy, to act nobly without external appliances. There are many high deeds from which we may be debarred for want of instruments, such as friends, wealth, and political power. These 'properties,' so to speak, it lies with Fortune to provide or to refuse. Thus Fortune is our Choragus, albeit Virtue is the true author of our life's drama. If Fortune cannot make, she can at least mar the performance. Or do I seem to you to have conceded too much? Then I will change the metaphor. If Fortune cannot spoil, she can at least soil our happiness. A dirty coat will serve the chief purposes of a coat; it will cover you and keep you warm; but all the same it is nicer to have a clean one. Good birth, good children, good looks—none of these depend upon ourselves, and yet they are in some measure necessary to happiness. Can you imagine the sage to be quite calculated for happiness, if he is positively repulsive in his personal appearance? Or if he is base-born, or solitary, or childless? How much less if his children are thoroughly bad, or good—but dead? Let the Cynics then cry out against us as they will. We shall nevertheless refuse in the name of common sense to run counter to obvious fact and universal feeling, and shall include good

living as well as right doing in our idea of happiness. We shall, with their leave, conceive of it as the exercise of virtue under fairly comfortable conditions. This is why we have added to the definition the words 'in a perfect life,' by which expression you must understand me to mean, not merely a fair spell of life, but a life adequately supplied with external goods. For happiness is in fact a compound notion, made up of these widely diverse elements—virtue and prosperity, just as a currency consists in part of pure gold and in part of base alloy. Herein lies the secret of that remarkable discrepancy of opinion by which some refer happiness to good luck and others to virtue.

This opens up for us the question—How is happiness attained?

It is evident that happiness either depends on man or it does not. If it does, it must come either by an intellectual or by a moral effort, for man may roughly be divided into head and heart. If it does not, it is either allotted to him by design or it is not. To say that it comes by design is to say that it is the gift of the Gods ; to say that it does not, is to relegate it to Chance. Thus the following scheme exhausts, and for safety against cavillers more than exhausts, the possible modes by which happiness can be attained.



When we look at the world we undoubtedly see some men whom, superficially at all events, we should call happy, and others to whom we should unhesitatingly deny that name. If we try to penetrate into the cause of this difference of lot, we sometimes think that there is some-

thing in the man himself—some power of intelligence or will—which accounts for his well-being, and sometimes, failing to find this, we set him down as the favourite of heaven, and sometimes again we content ourselves with calling him ‘a lucky fellow.’ Similarly in the case of the unhappy. We sometimes think that a man’s misery is due to some perversity in his own nature ; sometimes we are tempted to believe that his steps are dogged by an evil genius, and call him ‘ill-starred,’ and sometimes we merely regard him as the victim of chance. All these views then are held as a matter of fact. Let us endeavour to examine what amount of truth there is in them. And first of the view which represents happiness as the gift of Heaven.

If there is any gift at all of the Gods to men, we may surely say that happiness is a divine gift ; and the most so of all human things in proportion as it is the best. But considerations of this kind belong more properly to the science of theology. If I were lecturing to you on that subject, I would unhesitatingly say that happiness is sent from Heaven. Only I would beg of you not to imagine that this doctrine is incompatible with the view that it is the result of human exertions. For the way which the Gods adopt of giving it to man may be by letting him work for it. You remember what Epicharmus says—

‘Labour is the price at which the Gods sell us all their blessings.’

We turn now to the view which represents happiness as the chance result of Fortune’s lottery. Surely we cannot for a moment believe this ! It would be too jarring a note in the grand harmony of Nature, if the greatest and noblest of things were left to the disposal of chance. Nature not only produces the best result she can, but she produces it also in the best way ; and herein she resembles art and other modes of causation. Now it is better that happiness should

flow from virtue as effect from cause than that it should depend on chance. Therefore we may reasonably suppose that of these two ways the former is that in which virtue is produced. Thus we are thrown back upon the view that happiness is the result of human effort, being due to virtue, either intellectual or moral—that point we will not stop now to determine. This makes happiness divine enough; for the prize and aim of virtue must needs be something godlike and blessed. And happiness, being, as I have said, the prize of virtue, will be open to competition by all who care to learn the way to acquire it or to submit to the necessary training. I do not mean that all will achieve it: but all are free to enter the lists, unless indeed they are disqualified by some moral infirmity, just as it would be hopeless for a lame man to think of competing at Olympia.

This view is in accordance with our definition. For we said that happiness was an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. That at least was the gist of our definition: if we said anything besides, we may leave it out of sight for the moment. Of the other goods which are recognised in the popular classification, those of the body must be presupposed, such as health, strength, and longevity, not to mention a reasonable amount of good looks, while external goods are by their nature helpful and useful by way of instruments.

This view is also in accordance with what we said at starting with regard to ethics being a branch of statecraft. Statecraft aims at human happiness, and the statesman who is worthy of the name evidently regards this as depending chiefly upon virtue, for there is nothing which he has so much at heart as to render the citizens good and inclined to noble actions.

Further, this view explains the fact that no one calls a beast, bird, or fish happy. For none of these are capable

of virtuous and rational action. If one of them lives better, and another worse, it must be owing to some other mode of participating in good. The same reason which applies permanently to brutes applies temporarily to children. They are disqualified for happiness by their tender years. The utmost they can do is to act rightly at the dictation of another; but so long as such action is not prompted from within, it lacks the essential characteristic of virtue. If we call them happy, it is in the hope that they may live to be so. But who can forecast their future?

And this brings us to consider the other side of happiness. There is need, as we said, not only of perfect virtue but also of a perfect life. For amid the chances and changes of life a Priam may preserve his virtue, but lose his happiness. Now no one calls a man happy, no matter how prosperous his life may have been, if he fall into signal misfortunes in his old age and perish miserably.

This subject however we must postpone till our next lecture.

LECTURE VI

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 10-12]

HOW HAPPINESS IS RELATED TO FORTUNE

ARE we to agree with Solon who would have us call no man happy so long as he is alive, but wait to see what his end is, and then pronounce judgement upon his career? 'Call no man happy so long as he is alive,' said Solon. So far as the mere words go, this might mean two things—

- (1) That a man begins to be happy when he is dead;
- (2) That only then can one safely call a man happy as being beyond the reach of misfortune.

The first meaning is mentioned only to be excluded. It is plainly not what Solon intended; and it is peculiarly impossible for us to accept it, as it is in flat contradiction to our definition. That makes happiness consist in activity, whereas this interpretation of Solon's words would make happiness begin when all activity, so far as we can see, is over.

The second meaning then must be the right one. And this interpretation raises the whole question of the relation of happiness to fortune. How far is happiness dependent upon fortune? According to Solon it is entirely so. For if we really think a man happy, why are we not at liberty to call him so, so long as he is alive? Evidently because

fortune may change. We must wait then till he is beyond her power; and then only shall we be safe in calling him happy.

But on the head of this we may raise the further question—Are we safe in calling a man happy even when he is dead? Man, as we have seen, is a social being, and his happiness cannot be considered as confined to himself. We must take some account of what happens to his nearest and dearest even after he is gone. Suppose a man to have lived happily up to old age and to have gone down to his grave in honour, and then suppose that, after he is gone, his son commits some disgraceful act which brands his name with infamy—would not our notion of his happiness become tarnished thereby? Should we not shake our heads over him and say 'Poor man!'

THEOPHRASTUS. If the father is not conscious of the son's disgrace, I do not see that his happiness would be in any way affected by it.

ARISTOTLE. Very likely. But that is not our present point. The question you must remember is not—When *is* a man happy? but—When may a man be *called* happy? It is a logical and not a theological question that we are now discussing. The same sort of question may be raised even with regard to the living. Oedipus was a happy man in his own estimation. He had solved the riddle of the Sphinx, had saved the people of Thebes, and had been rewarded with the hand of the queen; he was prosperous and beloved. But Teiresias, the seer, knowing that he has slain his father and married his mother, shudders at the sight of him and deems him the most miserable of mankind. Teiresias' notion of Oedipus' happiness was affected by what was afterwards to happen to Oedipus himself; and our question is how far our notion of a dead man's happiness ought to be affected by what afterwards happens to his

descendants. On the one hand we cannot refuse to let it be affected to some extent, owing to the social nature of man. On the other hand it is absurd to conceive of the dead man's happiness as chopping and changing with every turn in the fortunes of his descendants, some of whom may be happy and prosperous and others the reverse. There is a difficulty either way. But let us go back to the discussion of Solon's dictum ; it may perhaps throw some light upon the present question, which is, after all, only a side-issue.

Are we then always to see the end, and never call a man happy because he is so, but only because he was? It is argued that this must be the case on the ground that happiness is something permanent and by no means liable to change, whereas the wheel of fortune which deals a Croesus prosperity and honour may at its next turn bring him disaster and degradation. We must therefore wait till the wheel is done turning, else we shall have to call the same man happy and again miserable many times over. But I reply that happiness is not thus the sport of fortune. The happy man is no chameleon, to change his hue with the sunlight of prosperity or the shade of adversity. His house is not built on the sand, to fall when the waves come and the winds blow. No : happiness is a tree which has its roots deeply fixed in the settled serenity of a virtuous mind. The blasts of fortune may strip its fair foliage and break its branches, but the root of the matter is there all the time. For happiness, as we have seen, has an inner and an outer side. The inner side is virtue, the outer is prosperity. But the inner so far transcends the outer in importance that the latter cannot be weighed in the balance against it. It is not then in the turns of chance that our weal or woe lies, but human life has need of the favours of fortune *in addition*, whereas it is acting virtuously that determines

happiness, and the contrary behaviour that determines misery. This shows how right we were, when framing our definition, to lay the chief stress upon virtuous activities. There can be nothing more permanent than they.

THEOPHRASTUS. Pardon me, but I should have thought there could be nothing less so. Is not an activity a fleeting thing that comes and goes like a spark struck from a flint?

ARISTOTLE. You are right; but I daresay you can see what I meant. Your own metaphor supplies an illustration. The perpetual recurrence of activities points to the existence of a permanent state underlying them, from which they proceed, as the sparks prove the existence of the flint. Virtue then is the most permanent possession that a man can have—more permanent even than knowledge. After we have learned a science we may forget it again; the very elements of it may disappear from the mind; but virtue is part of the soul's substance—to forget that is to cease to be yourself. This remark applies to intellectual virtue as well as to moral virtue. The mental power may remain unimpaired when the contents of a science, which are adventitious to the mind, are forgotten. The reason of this stability of virtue is no doubt to be found in the fact that we are continually exercising it. A man can hardly be awake for a moment without performing right or wrong in thought, word or deed, whereas he is not always exercising himself in the sciences he may have acquired; and intellectual, even more than moral, virtue admits of this continuous exercise.

Therefore we may surely say that the element of stability is to be found in the happy man, and that he will be such through life. For always, or more than anything else, will his acts and thoughts be occupied with virtue. As for the turns of chance he may be trusted to bear them in the noblest way, and always, under all circumstances, with

grace—he, I mean, who is truly good and foursquare without flaw. But the power of chance may of course be displayed in widely different degrees; and so we must distinguish. Petty instances, either of good or evil fortune, manifestly do not suffice to turn the scale of life. But what if fortune showers her favours upon a man or pelts him with disasters? Why, in the one case life will be rendered more blissful, for it cannot be denied that she has power to lend a lustre to it, and her gifts may be turned to good and noble uses; in the other case the bliss of life is crushed and marred: for misfortunes bring pains in their train and prove a hindrance to many activities. Nevertheless even under these the force of nobility shines out, when a man bears calmly many great disasters, not from insensibility, but because he is generous and of a great soul. Setting happiness then, as we do, not in the outward surroundings of a man, but in his inward state, we may fairly say that no one who has attained to the bliss of virtue will ever justly become an object of pity or contempt: for he will never do things that are hateful and vile. The man who is truly good and wise will bear the turns of chance with a good grace, and always make the best of his circumstances, just as a good general makes the most efficient use of the force that he has at his disposal, and as a good shoemaker makes the best shoe he can out of the leather supplied to him. This being so, I say the happy man will never sink so low as to deserve the name 'wretched,' not that I mean to say he will be 'blessed,' if he fall into misfortunes like those of Priam. To say that he is variable and liable to change is the very last thing that is true of him. For he will not be stirred from his happiness by any light or ordinary misfortunes, but only by great and crushing calamities; and from under such as these he will not emerge into happiness again in any short time, but if at all, in some full-rounded

period, during which his virtue has proved victorious over fate. What hinders us then from defining the happy man as *one who displays perfect virtue and is adequately supplied with external goods, not for any chance period, but for a complete lifetime?* Or ought we to add that his death must be in keeping with his life? Since the future is dark to us, and happiness is an idea that involves finality and completeness. We will, therefore, call those of the living happy who satisfy our definition: but in calling them happy we will remember that they are but men. For perhaps to talk of a 'happy man' may after all be a contradiction in terms, like talking of a 'round square.'

Let so much then suffice for this subject. You see that I have given you a definition of the happy man in the concrete, which carries out the definition already given of happiness in the abstract. But in this second definition more stress has been laid than in the preceding one upon the external side of happiness. For our object in introducing this discussion of Solon's saying has been to bring out as clearly as may be the relation between happiness and good fortune.

NICOMACHUS. I am afraid, father, that I am very dull of apprehension: but I must confess that, in spite of all you have said, I do not yet fully understand this point, and should be puzzled to give a clear account of your doctrine, if I were challenged to do so by the Cynics.

ARISTOTLE. I do not think the fault lies with you, my son. The subject is a very obscure one, and I cannot hope that I have kept my language entirely free from contradiction. It is easy enough to be logical, if you are ready to disregard facts: but to face facts and be logical too is a very different matter. Not that facts can possibly be illogical, for then they would not be facts; but that it is so hard to adjust one's thought so as exactly to cover them. Nevertheless

that you may not be wanting in an answer to our opponents, I will endeavour now to put the matter for you in a nutshell. Briefly, my doctrine is this. External goods are conditions, but not causes, of happiness. They are conditions, because without a certain amount of them, though, rightly regarded, a surprisingly small amount, happiness cannot be. They are not causes of happiness, because the same cause always produces the same effect, so that, given external goods, happiness ought to follow; whereas we know that these goods may be present to any extent without happiness resulting from them.

We must revert now for a moment to a question which arose incidentally, namely, how far the dead are affected by the fortunes of their descendants and of their friends generally. We were discussing it before on purely logical grounds, but there is always the popular belief to be reckoned with, derived from Homer, of a dim sort of consciousness possessed by the dead. It is difficult to know what to say on this subject. On the one hand, to deny that the dead are affected at all seems too cold a doctrine and contrary to current opinion. On the other hand, in view of the infinite diversity of the effects of fortune, and how some come home to us much more than others, we are in danger of being led astray into endless discussion, if we attempt to determine the particular importance of each. We must be content therefore with some rough general statement. The distinction which we drew before between the lighter misfortunes, which do not suffice to turn the scale of life, and the heavier which do, may be extended now from the individual to his friends. And then there is another point which should be taken account of, namely, the difference of vividness that there may be between the consciousness of the dead and that of the living. When you see some tragedy or atrocity represented on the stage

you are far more profoundly affected than when you are merely informed of it in the prologue ; and the same sort of difference, we may surmise, exists between the sensations of the spectators who are present at the play of life, and those who have reached home before them and require to be told what the performance has been. Or does the tale ever reach them, to disturb their slumbers ? This, after all, we cannot be sure of. But even if it does, we may assume that it is a tale of little meaning by the time it reaches them. So that on the whole we may conclude that the dead are affected to some extent, whether for good or evil, by the fortunes of their descendants, but not so far as to change the happiness of those who have been happy in their own lives into misery or—do anything else of the kind.

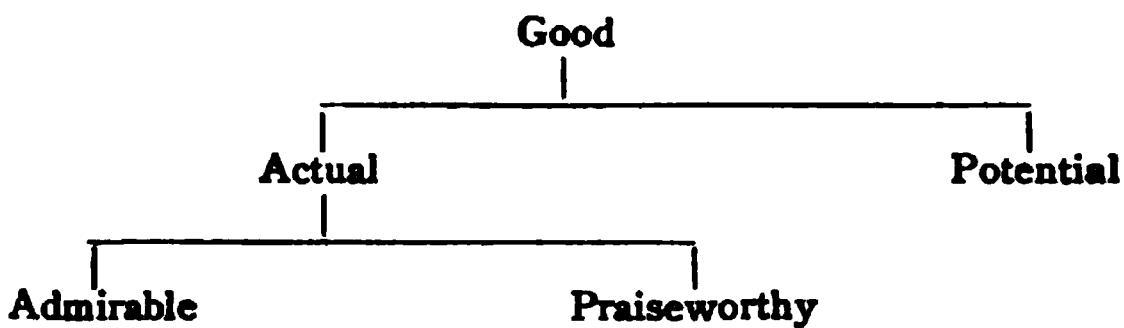
We have already had occasion to classify goods from various points of view. We divided them first, at the suggestion of Eudemus, into the essential and the useful. Then we classified them from the point of view of finality into (1) ends only, (2) ends and means, (3) means only. Afterwards we saw reason to introduce the popular three-fold division, into goods of the soul, goods of the body and external goods. Now I must call your attention to yet another threefold division of goods into—

The admirable,
The praiseworthy,
Potentialities.

It will be worth our while to examine this division with a view to clearing up our ideas about happiness.

The first point then to be noticed about this threefold division is that it rests upon a previous twofold division. Goods, it is assumed to begin with, are either actually good or only potentially so. Of the latter kind are such things as wealth and power, which may be good or evil according as they are used well or ill. We however reckon even these

potentialities as goods, since we judge of a thing's nature from the use made of it by the wise and good man. But it is manifest that happiness does not fall into this class, since it is unconditionally good. So that we must look for it on the side of actual goods, which are distinguished into the admirable and the praiseworthy.



Let us try to lay a finger on the exact point of difference between the two.

You praise a thing because it is good for something: but a thing may be so good as to be good for nothing. To be called 'good for nothing' is at once the highest compliment and the deepest disgrace. It is the deepest disgrace, if it is used of a thing which was meant to serve some end, but which altogether fails to attain it; it is the highest compliment, if it indicates that a thing is an end in itself. Praise then or commendation is bestowed upon things in so far as they are means to something beyond themselves, whereas in so far as they are ends in themselves, they are above praise. Thus you see that we praise a thing on the ground of qualities which look beyond itself, that is, because it stands in a certain relation to some good and worthy end. And notice also that we praise a thing with a view to results. Praise is a sort of investment. You lay out so much praise, and expect a return of good conduct. Thus we praise the just and brave man, and the good man generally, in order to make them the keener to perform virtuous acts. Hence praise, or commendation, is out of place in relation to the Gods. They are above praise, and to praise is to degrade

them. It amounts to patting them on the back and saying, 'You are very good for certain ends'—ourselves presumably—which is not the right attitude of mind to assume towards them.

Since praise then is of this essentially relative nature, it is easy to see that it does not attach to the highest things. We must find something greater and better than praise, to express our sense of their perfection. This something greater we may call admiration or honour: but the same idea is expressed, when we pronounce a thing blessed and happy. These are the terms that are rightly applied to the Gods; and we apply them also to the men whom we think most to resemble the Gods. The same thing is true of goods. You praise justice because it conduces to happiness. But you do not praise happiness itself—it is above praise: you simply call it blessed, as being something diviner and better. Eudoxus used a very good argument in urging the claim of pleasure to the highest place. He maintained that the fact of its not being praised, though a good, was a proof that it was above the things that are praised, and of this nature, he contended, are only God and the good, they being the ends to which all other things are referred as means.

THEOPHRASTUS. Would Eudoxus allow two goods in the highest class?

ARISTOTLE. It is quite conceivable that he might have said that these two are one, God being the good after which all nature is striving.

NICOMACHUS. It seems to me, father, that the threefold division of goods which you have been discussing coincides with our own triple classification of goods in order of finality.

ARISTOTLE. Roughly speaking, you may say it does. The admirable are ends only; the praiseworthy are means and

ends ; the potentialities are means only. But it would not be worth while to insist on this identification of the two divisions, if logical objections were urged against it.

EUDEMUS. You have distinguished so clearly for us between praise and admiration, that I wish you would explain the meaning of a third term which is often used, I mean 'encomium.'

ARISTOTLE. It is going a little off the point to do so, but all the same I will endeavour to meet your wishes. There is a distinct species of poetry which goes under that name, of which you have instances in the Odes of Pindar, and I daresay you remember the parody on the same kind of composition which Aristophanes has given in the *Clouds*, where Strepsiades sings an encomium upon himself. If we were defining the various kinds of poetry, we should have to go carefully into this subject. But for the present it will suffice to say that an encomium, which is the same thing as a eulogy or panegyric, is pronounced upon some achievement, whether bodily or mental, whereas praise is bestowed upon qualities. Thus you praise a man for being a good runner or a good wrestler : but you reserve your encomium upon him until he has won the race or proved victor in the arena. Encomia may be bestowed either on the living or the dead : but praise is proper only to the living, for it is meant as an incentive to virtue on the part of him to whom it is addressed. We may arrange the three modes of laudation in ascending order in this way—

Encomia are bestowed upon good acts, which lead to the formation of virtuous states ;

Praise is bestowed upon virtuous states, which lead to happiness ;

Admiration is reserved for happiness, which leads to nothing.

As the act both precedes and follows the state, encomia

may come before or after praise, as you please. It was only for the sake of symmetry that we put them first.

One word more before concluding this lecture. We set down happiness as admirable on the ground that it is an end or final cause ; but happiness may equally be regarded as a beginning or efficient cause, since it is the desire for it that impels us to act. Thus happiness is the beginning and the end—the Alpha and the Omega—of life.

LECTURE VII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, I. 13]

DIVISIONS OF THE SOUL: VIRTUE PROVISIONALLY DEFINED

FROM happiness we must now go on to virtue, which is the chief factor in it. The first great step towards the completion of our design was made when we defined happiness; another great step will have been made, if we can succeed in defining virtue: for the second definition is sure to give us an insight into the first. Moreover, the inquiry will be entirely in accordance with our original purpose. For we referred the highest good to the science of statecraft, and, as I said before, the supreme concern of the genuine statesman is with virtue. We may see this from the example of the Cretan and Lacedaemonian lawgivers and any others who have attempted to satisfy the ideal of statecraft.

When we talk of virtue, it must, of course, be understood that we mean the virtue of man: for it was the good of man that we were in search of and the happiness of man. And when we talk of the virtue of man, it must be understood that we mean the virtue of the soul, not of the body, happiness with us being an activity of the soul. In order then that we may understand virtue, it is necessary that we

should know something about the soul. The doctor who intends to specialise on the eye first spends pains on acquiring a knowledge of the whole body ; and the same care must be displayed by the statesman with regard to a knowledge of the soul, or rather much more care, inasmuch as his art is concerned with things of greater moment than that of the physician. The statesman may be regarded as a mental oculist, since the statesman's concern is with education, and the ultimate object of education is the developement of intellect, and intellect we declare to be the eye of the soul.

But when we say that the statesman must know something about the soul, it must not be supposed that he need trouble himself about the subtleties of psychology. The amount of knowledge that he requires is strictly limited by his practical purpose, which is to develope virtue in the citizens. A broad grasp of the subject, provided it be correct, is quite sufficient for this end. We need go no further into the subject now than to repeat some of the statements that are contained in our popular lectures. For instance, we are in the habit of dividing the soul into two parts—

- (1) Irrational.
- (2) Rational.

THEOPHRASTUS. Are we to understand that these are really distinct, or only two different ways of looking at the same thing ?

ARISTOTLE. You have asked me a difficult question, but fortunately it is of no importance to our present purpose to answer it. Plato at all events thought that the parts of the soul were really distinct : for he made the rational resident in the head and the irrational in the breast and stomach. But, after all, the two may be no more really distinct than the convex and the concave of a circle, which are absolutely

the same thing looked at from opposite points of view, especially if we remember that the circumference, which is supposed to separate them, is a line without breadth. So in the case of man, we divide him into reason and feeling—intellect and emotions—head and heart: but may it not all the time simply be the man thinking and the man feeling? But let us return to our division.

On the irrational side we unhesitatingly put down that part of the soul which is common to us with the plants, I mean the cause of nutrition and growth. Growth is a thing with which reason has nothing to do. You do not will your growth, and no man in his senses sits down to deliberate about it. These vegetative functions of the soul are possessed as much by an embryo, in which reason is not developed, as by the deepest philosopher.

THEOPHRASTUS. I see that you do not think the principle of growth to be different from the vital principle generally.

ARISTOTLE. No: it is hardly necessary to suppose that. The same principle may fairly be held competent to do the work both of growing and living. We ought never to multiply causes unnecessarily. But this part of the soul with its powers has nothing to do with the virtue of man as man. The best proof of this is that this part is most active in sleep, which is just the time when the good and bad man are least distinguishable, whence it is said that for half their life there is no difference between the happy and the miserable. And this statement is true enough. For sleep may be defined as the inactivity of the moral sense. In sleep the reason and will are quiescent, while the desires and passions often run riot uncontrolled. But whenever these turbulent movements reach the higher principle, it reasserts its sway: so that some difference may be detected between the dreams of the virtuous and those of ordinary folk. However, we may quit this subject, since the vegeta-

tive functions, whether displayed in growing or merely in repairing the waste of the body, can play no part in the virtue special to man.

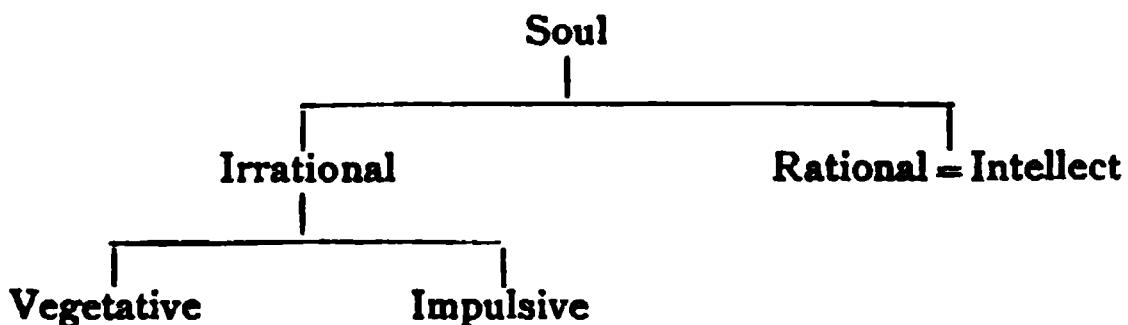
On the rational side of the soul we should unhesitatingly put down intellect, which alone possesses reason in the strict sense of the words.

Neither the vegetative principle then in man nor yet the intellect need cause us any trouble in our division. But there is a third nature in the soul, to which it is not so easy to assign its proper place. I refer to the appetites and propensities, to the feelings, emotions, passions—call them what you will—to the something in man which stirs him to action, which I should sum up under the one head of 'impulse.' For reason, you must know, is not a principle of action. It does not move you except in the sense in which a candle moves you in the dark, by showing you where you are going. If you could divest yourself of passion altogether, you would never act at all, but only speculate. So that those who would fain reduce man to a being of pure reason would destroy his nature as man.

To which side of the soul then are we to refer these appetites and so on? To the rational or the irrational? They are certainly distinct from reason, and are often strongly opposed to it, or rather, to speak accurately, they are opposed to the desire which is enlightened by reason. If I talk of the passions being opposed to reason, you must understand me to be using a shorthand expression. We talk thus both of the man who possesses self-control and of him who lacks it. In both the light of reason shines clear and points them to the better course; in both also there is something else present which fights and strives against reason. But in the former the result of the struggle is the victory of reason over passion, and in the latter the victory of passion over reason.

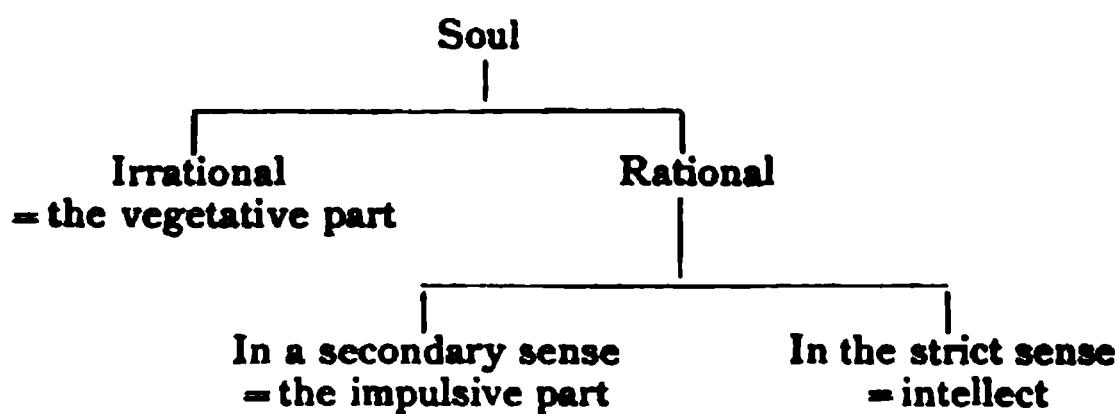
NICOMACHUS. Can you explain to us, father, how there can thus be opposing inclinations in man, especially if, as you seemed to say just now, his nature is essentially one?

ARISTOTLE. I cannot, my son: but still you will have to believe it, for it is a fact. To explain a thing is to show that it does not stand alone—that it is like other things with which we are more familiar. Now I do not know that we can adduce anything which is really like this curious fact of the coexistence of opposite inclinations in the same human agent; but still the fact is there, and so we must believe it, though we cannot explain or even comprehend it. The most that I can do to throw light upon the subject is to bring forward an imperfect analogy from the body. There are certain forms of paralysis in which, when men will to move their limbs to the right, they find them going off on the contrary to the left. There may be something similar to this in the soul, although we cannot see it; and the man whom we call lacking in self-restraint, whose impulses run counter to his reason, may be said to be suffering from a kind of moral paralysis. But, to return to the division of the soul. If we regard the feelings as belonging to the irrational side, the scheme that I am about to draw for you will represent the result at which we have arrived.



This is, I suppose, the strict logic of the thing, since the feelings, which we have called 'the impulsive part' are not rational. And yet, after all, they have more to do with reason than with the plant-life in the soul. For though

they do not possess reason in themselves, they are still capable of obeying it, which the merely vegetative powers of the soul are not. In the man of self-restraint they do thus obey reason ; and they do so still more perfectly in the ideally temperate and brave man : for in him all things are in harmony with reason. He differs from the man of self-restraint in requiring no struggle to subdue his feelings. The feelings then also may be said in a sense to have reason, if a child may be said to have it, when he obeys reason in a father or in friends who are wiser than himself. And that the feelings may thus be worked upon by reason is shown by the fact of admonition, and of rebuke and exhortation generally. At all events it will suit our purpose better to transfer the feelings to the rational side of the soul, and so subdivide that instead of the other part. In either case we shall arrive ultimately at the same three species, and the first step will be identical in both methods of division.



We consider then that the rational part of the soul is two-fold, the one possessing reason in the strict sense of the term, that is to say, in itself, the other after the fashion of a child that is capable of hearkening to a father.

Virtue also, which it was our object to investigate, may be divided on the same principle. There are the virtues, or excellences, of the rational part proper, which we shall call the intellectual virtues, and the virtues of the semi-rational part, which we shall call the moral virtues. The

feelings, you will observe, have no virtue in themselves: their virtue is to be under the control of reason. As instances of intellectual virtues we may take philosophy, intelligence, and wisdom; as instances of moral virtues liberality and temperance. If we wish to praise a man morally, we do not say that he is philosophical or intelligent, but that he is gentle or temperate, or something of that sort, which involves a reference to his feelings. But still we praise the philosopher also on the score of his state of mind; and virtues generally may be defined as *praiseworthy mental states*. It will be our business in succeeding lectures to see wherein precisely this praiseworthiness of virtue consists. But for the present we may take this as a rough definition of virtue.

LECTURE VIII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, II. 1, 2]

VIRTUE COMES BY HABIT: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ACTS WHICH TEND TO FORM IT

As a result of our examination of the soul we divided virtue into two kinds—moral and intellectual. These two forms of excellence differ in many points from one another, but perhaps in nothing more markedly than in this. Intellectual virtue owes its origin and growth for the most part to teaching—not that nature and habit have not also something to do with it—and therefore it needs experience and time, whereas moral virtue comes from habit. Our word for it, as you know, is etymologically connected with habit.

We shall examine later on the perfection of the intellectual part of the soul, but for the present, and indeed for a long time to come, we shall confine ourselves to that of the emotional and moral part.

Now the first point which I wish to insist upon is that moral virtue comes, as I have said, by habit or practice. It does not therefore come by nature, in which case it would be wholly out of our own power. This is a point of so much importance that I shall bring forward four arguments

to prove it. First, take them in brief for convenience of remembrance, and let me elaborate them later.

Moral virtue does not come by nature ; for, if it did—

(1) it would be invariable like the laws of nature ;

(2) the capacity would precede the act, whereas the act precedes the capacity ;

(3) lawgivers would not lay such stress upon training ;

(4) it would not depend upon conduct.

(1) Fire struggles up to heaven, which is its proper abode ; a stone, if left unsupported, moves down to earth, to rejoin the mass of its kindred nature. This is the natural and necessary motion of each. Could you train fire to burn down or a stone to fall up ? Suppose I were to take this stone and throw it into the air, and were to continue to do so, with necessary intervals for rest and refreshment, for the remainder of my natural life ; and then were to appoint you, my son, or Eudemus or Theophrastus here, to succeed me in the task of educating this stone : do you think that, after any amount of training, we should get it into the habit of falling up ? No : we are so convinced of the futility of the attempt that we shall not devote our energies to trying the experiment. The virtues therefore obviously are not natural in this way, since nothing which is by nature can be altered by training. But you must not imagine me to mean that the virtues exist in us through any violation of nature. Nature fits us for receiving them, but they must be acquired by practice.

(2) Again, when a thing comes by nature, the capacity precedes the act, as in the case of the senses. We do not acquire the senses of sight or hearing by often seeing or often hearing : on the contrary, a child comes into the world with a capacity of seeing—it opens its eyes and it sees. It may require a good deal of practice before it interprets rightly what it sees, but the mere act of seeing is perfect from the

first. Or again, take sneezing. That is a thing which comes by nature. We do not acquire the power of sneezing by repeatedly attempting to sneeze: but rather we have the power fully formed, and exert it when occasion calls for it. Now we do not come into the world with *this* sort of capacity for virtue. We come into the world with a blank capacity, so to speak, for turning out virtuous or vicious according to the training we receive. Hence in the case of the virtues the act must precede the capacity. By 'capacity' now I mean a formed capacity—in other words, a state or habit. Virtue in this respect resembles art, to which it bears so close an analogy in other ways. The thing which has to be done when learnt is learnt by doing it. As the harper acquires his art by repeatedly fingering his instrument, so by repeatedly checking our appetites we become temperate, and by repeatedly encountering dangers we become brave.

(3) Furthermore, it is evident that lawgivers do not regard virtue as coming by nature. For they concentrate their efforts on making the citizens good by training. This at least is the intention of every lawgiver: if he fails to carry it out, he misses his mark. It is just herein, namely, in the success or otherwise, of the attempt at moral training of the citizens, that the goodness or badness of political institutions really lies.

(4) Lastly, virtue does not come by nature, because it depends on the way in which we ourselves behave under certain circumstances whether a virtue is formed in us or not. The very same set of circumstances constantly recurring may lead to the formation of a virtue or a vice. And the same is true of art. From playing on the harp men do not always turn out good harpers, but very often bad ones; and both good and bad bricklayers are made so by the laying of bricks. Again, how is it that one

acquires a good hand in writing? It is the effect of constant practice. And how do we spoil our handwriting? That is the effect of constant practice too. All depends upon the way in which the thing is done. If this were not so, there would be no advantage in teaching: but all would have been good or bad craftsmen from birth. Now transfer what I have been saying to moral virtue. It is according to the way in which we behave in our dealings with men that we become some of us just and some of us unjust, and according to our conduct under danger, and by accustoming ourselves to feel fear or confidence, that we become some brave and some cowards. Precisely the same thing holds true with regard to the appetites and feelings of anger. By constantly controlling these impulses we shall form in ourselves habits of temperance and gentleness, whereas, if we repeatedly give way to them, we shall become intemperate and passionate. In one word, the moral habits are generated by a repetition of like acts: for such as the acts are, such will be the habits or states that result from them. Do not imagine that any act of your lives is indifferent; it will go to rivet you in a habit either of virtue or vice. You see then the tremendous importance of training, especially in tender years. It makes almost the whole difference between the good man and the bad, and therefore largely determines our weal or woe.

I have told you before that the course of lectures on which we are at present engaged has not a purely theoretical or speculative object like the rest. We are not inquiring now what virtue is out of a mere curiosity to know, but in order that we may become good; else we might just as well have left the subject alone, for any practical benefit that we should derive from it. Now the doctrine which we have just reached of the formation of mental states out of individual acts has an intensely practical bearing. It

behoves us then to examine closely the nature of the acts which go to form a habit of virtue. I will lay down three characteristics of these acts, to which it seems worth while to draw your attention—

- (1) They comply with the standard of reason ;
- (2) They observe a mean between excess and defect ;
- (3) They tend to reproduce themselves.

(1) The first of these attributes we must leave in all its vagueness for the present, and simply take for granted. We may have an opportunity of explaining what is meant by 'the standard of reason,' and its relation to moral virtue, when we come to treat of the perfection of the intellect. But let me here repeat a warning that I have given before, and remind you that in dealing with any subject such an amount of precision of statement, and such an amount only, must be expected as is in keeping with the matter in hand. Now questions of conduct and expediency have no more fixity than questions of health. What is wholesome for one may be unwholesome for another ; and similarly what is right for one may be wrong for another. Do not misunderstand me, as if I wished to drive you into sheer Protagoreanism by declaring that all is relative to the individual. It is not so in medicine, which I used as an analogy. For though it is quite true to say that one man's meat is another man's poison, still there are some things which will poison everybody. You never find yourself asking a friend to drink a pint of hemlock with you ; and again, though a man may live on milk or rice, he will not hold soul and body together on sawdust. All that I want to insist upon is the broad difference that must exist between a science which deals with necessary, and one, like ours, which deals with contingent truth. Statements about feelings and actions, which constitute the content of ethical science, can only have the same amount

of definiteness as their subject-matter. But feelings and actions are concrete and particular—not, like mathematical notions, abstract and universal. Any given feeling must be manifested, and any given action take place, under particular circumstances: but these circumstances admit of such variety that they may indefinitely alter the right and wrong with regard both to feelings and actions. Only the most general statements then must be looked for in the subject of morals. We can no more map out a man's conduct beforehand in the multitudinous circumstances of life than we can lay down rules for medicine and navigation which will save all deliberation in particular cases. The doctor and the pilot learn certain general principles, but they are called upon to exercise their own judgement in applying them. So it is in morals. Nevertheless we must do our best with our science, and try to attain such exactness as we may.

(2) Here, then, is a broad generalization which I think can safely be made, namely, that moral excellence is destroyed alike by excess and defect. The same thing may be observed in the case of strength and health; for we must use what we can see as an illustration of what we cannot see. Too much exercise or too little impairs strength; too much meat and drink or too little impairs health; it is the right proportion in either case that produces and increases and preserves them. So it is in the case of temperance and courage and the virtues generally. If you run away from everything, and are afraid of everything, and stand your ground against nothing, you become a coward, whereas if you fear nothing at all, but make for every adversary, you become foolhardy. Similarly he who takes his fill of every pleasure and abstains from none becomes intemperate, whereas he who shuns all becomes stolid, like the stupid rustic of the

stage. For temperance and courage are destroyed by excess or defect, but preserved by moderation.

(3) We have seen already that virtue is both produced and destroyed from the same set of circumstances, and we have now to add that it displays itself in the same field in which it was formed. The analogy of strength may be used again to illustrate this point. Strength is acquired by taking a quantity of food and undergoing a great many labours. And what does it enable the strong man to do? Why, to take a quantity of food and undergo a great many labours. Similarly in the case of virtue. By repeatedly withstanding temptations to indulgence we establish a habit of self-control, and, when once it is established, it finds its exercise in enabling us the more easily to withstand temptations, until at last the temptation ceases to be felt. The same is true of courage. It is by accustoming ourselves to despise terrors and endure them that we become brave, and, when we have become so, we shall be best able to despise terrors. Thus the act tends to produce the state and the state to reproduce the act.

LECTURE IX

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, II. 3, 4]

THE RELATION OF VIRTUE TO PLEASURE: THE ANALOGY BETWEEN VIRTUE AND ART: REFUTATION OF AN OBJECTION AGAINST THE DOCTRINE THAT VIRTUE IS ACQUIRED BY HABIT

LET me give you a practical test whereby you may judge whether a moral virtue is formed in you or not. Ask yourself whether the act, to which it leads, is attended with pleasure or pain. The man who can abstain from bodily pleasures and take delight in so doing, is temperate; whereas the man who abstains, but with reluctance, is intemperate. Similarly the man who endures dangers, and feels positive pleasure in so doing, or at all events is not pained, is brave, whereas he who is pained is a coward.

THEOPHRASTUS. It seems rather hard to call a man who abstains from pleasure intemperate, and a man who endures danger a coward. I daresay many a man who has received the prize of valour did not at all enjoy the process by which it was achieved.

ARISTOTLE. Your remark is a perfectly just one, and I confess that my language was loose. Let us say rather that the man who abstains from pleasure, although he

does not like doing so, is not temperate; and that the man who dislikes facing danger is not brave. Our virtues are ideal, and if they do not happen to fit the heroes and sages of the period, so much the worse for those heroes and sages. But of course we would award their due meed of praise to both the characters that have been mentioned. The state of mind of the man who abstains from improper pleasures, but does so with reluctance, is what we denominate self-control. It is the halfway house to temperance. If a man persists in restraining base desires, he will ultimately pass into the state of temperance, in which there are no base desires to restrain: but till then he is not virtuous in the ideal sense of the term, though it may be that self-control is the highest virtue, of which any of us, as a matter of fact, is capable. We have no name for the state of mind of the man who faces while he fears danger. But that stands in the same relation to courage as self-control does to temperance. And similarly there are other states which serve as a threshold to the other virtues, as for instance, the state of mind of him who gives liberally, from a sense of right, although he does not enjoy giving. But, as I was saying, if you want to know whether you have achieved a virtuous state, see whether the act is pleasant or painful to you. If it brings you pleasure, you may assume that the habit is formed; if it still seems irksome, you had better practise further. This is one way in which moral virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain. But we may go further, and say that it is wholly concerned with those feelings, and would have no meaning apart from them. This point is one which requires to be established in due form by reasoning. So you may take the following arguments—

(1) Pleasure tempts us into wrong and pain deters us from right.

But virtue is concerned with right and wrong.

∴ Virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain.

Thus we see that virtue may be considered to consist in the due regulation of pleasure and pain ; and the right education, as Plato says, is nothing more than training children to feel pleasure and pain on the proper occasions ; 'to hate what they ought to hate from first to last, and to love what they ought to love.'

(2) Virtue is concerned with feelings and acts.

But every feeling and every act is attended with pleasure or pain.

∴ Virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain.

Every act is prompted by a feeling of some kind, and we maintain that there is no feeling which is purely indifferent, but that every feeling must involve some amount, no matter how small, of pleasure or pain. Indeed it is this which distinguishes feeling from the other contents of the mind.

(3) The next argument I cannot state so concisely as the two former. You know that remedies act through contraries. Now punishments are a sort of remedies—they are a kind of moral medicine, which is administered with a view to supplanting the disease of the soul, which is vice, by its health, which is virtue. To this end the pleasure that uninstructed persons take in wrong actions has to be corrected by the pains of the law. It follows therefore that virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain.

(4) I told you the day before yesterday that virtue and vice arise out of the same set of circumstances, and that a state displays itself in the same field in which it was formed. Every mental state therefore has a natural relation to that by which it is made better or worse.

Now mental states are made better or worse by pleasure and pain.

∴ Mental states have a natural relation to pleasure and pain.

But virtue is a mental state.

∴ Virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain.

Consider within yourselves by what means virtue is likely to be impaired. Is it not by the ill-regulated pursuit and avoidance of pleasure and pain, when we either seek or shun such as we ought not, or at a time when we ought not, or in a way we ought not?—I need not specify further conditions, as I am not seeking now to make a guarded statement. But a great many people, for want of attending to these limitations, rush off with the notion that since feeling is thus inimical to virtue, feeling must be wholly bad. Consequently they are ready to define the virtues offhand as 'apathies' and 'quietudes.' But here they err. For it is not the extirpation of feeling, but the regulation of feeling that has to be aimed at.

The arguments which I have already given you are, I think, quite sufficient to prove the intimate connexion of virtue with pleasure and pain; but still it would be possible to add to them, if it were worth our while to do so. As a result of them we may now substitute for the former vague definition of virtue as a praiseworthy mental state, a more full, though still not a final definition of moral virtue as '*that state of mind which tends to the best course of action with regard to pleasures and pains*'; and vice may be defined as the opposite of this. Of course you will understand that all I have been saying refers to moral virtue. Intellectual virtue may be connected with pleasure, but it is pleasure of a wholly different kind.

NICOMACHUS. May I try, father, by way of practice, if I can add anything to what you have said, though it will be only like a tiny rill returning its water to the ocean?

ARISTOTLE. By all means, my son. I am delighted that you should propose it. For in learning the mind should be active and not merely passive. Practice is as

important as instruction, just as exercise is no less necessary to health than food.

NICOMACHUS. Here then is my first argument.

(5) There are three motives that lead to choice, the right, the useful, and the pleasant; and three that lead to avoidance, the opposites of these, namely, the wrong, the hurtful, and the painful. Now the right is never without pleasure to the good man, and the useful, though it may be painful at the moment, is pleasant in the prospect of the advantage that will result from it: so that the three motives of choice may in a sense be summed up under the one head of pleasure. Again, the wrong is always painful to a good man, and the hurtful, however pleasant it may be at the moment, is painful in the prospect of evil consequences to come: so that the three motives for avoidance may again be summed up in a sense under the one head of pain. But virtue is concerned with choice and avoidance.

∴ Virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain.

ARISTOTLE. Well reasoned, Nicomachus! There is something broad and philosophical about your line of argument. Heaven grant that you may live to hold up the torch of truth, when it comes to my turn to hand it on in the race! You are quite right in maintaining that all motives for choice are in a certain sense resolvable into pleasure. But the many go wrong where you go right. You say that the right and the useful are pleasant: they convert this proposition, and think that the pleasant is right and useful. And then you have gone to the bottom of the matter in tracing choice to pleasure: for the lower animals exercise choice, and they know nothing of the right and useful. But I can see from your face that you have more to add, so I will not interrupt you again until you have done.

NICOMACHUS. I am afraid my other arguments will not

meet your approval so well as the first. But I will give them for what they are worth.

(6) The love of pleasure is bred in the bone of us all from our babyhood, so that it is difficult to erase this feeling which is ingrained into our life. Virtue therefore cannot but be concerned with pleasure.

(7) We all of us more or less make pleasure and pain the rule of our actions.

But virtue is concerned with actions.

∴ Virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain.

(8) Lastly, it is hard to contend against pleasure, harder even than against anger, though Heracleitus says that a man will give his life to gratify that.

Now the harder a thing is, the more virtue there is in doing it.

∴ Virtue is concerned with pleasure.

ARISTOTLE. No, I do not think that these arguments are equal to the first : but then it was hardly to be expected that they should come up to it. Indeed if you had had many more as good as that, I might as well have asked you to continue these lectures for me. Your second and third arguments only repeat what is already contained in the one which I gave you second. At the same time they do something to strengthen it, so I am glad you gave them. Your last argument is more interesting, because it offers more scope for discussion, being somewhat liable to misconstruction. You say the more difficulty there is the more virtue there is, and, you might have added, the more art, for here, again, the analogy between virtue and art holds good. In the sense in which you mean it this is quite true. For to do the difficult with ease is the perfection both of art and virtue. But if any one misunderstood you to mean that to do right with difficulty was virtue, he would fall into a vulgar error. It is only the road to virtue that is

rough; virtue herself dwells in fair pastures lighted by the sun. It is not essential either to art or virtue to contend with difficulties—that is only an accident of the situation—but to produce the best result in the best, that is, the easiest way. And yet there is a very prevalent idea to the contrary. I have often put this case to people—Given two men, one with a bad temper and another with a good, both of whom act with perfect gentleness under trying circumstances, which is the more virtuous?—and have generally received the answer that, of course, the man who controlled his bad temper was the more virtuous, and that little or no credit was due to the other. But this is to confound the idea of ‘the meritorious’ with that of ‘the virtuous.’ The virtuous may be always meritorious without the meritorious being always virtuous. To think of calling a man ‘good,’ because he has *bad* impulses! It is true we praise the man with a naturally bad temper more than the other. But why? To help him to overcome his bad temper, so that eventually he may become like the other. We encourage the man who is toiling up the hill, but the object, after all, is to be at the top. Virtue really only begins when all difficulty has vanished. But by that time we cease to praise, because virtue then has turned into bliss.

However, we have managed to wander from the point, which was the intimate connexion of moral virtue with pleasure and pain. This position may, I think, be considered to be more than established by this time. We may say that to deal rightly or wrongly with pleasure and pain is the sum and substance of virtue and vice. And if this is the concern of virtue, it must also be the concern of statecraft. Pleasure and pain, as Plato tells us, are the two well-springs of weal or woe, according as their waters are dispensed, both to state and individual and to every creature that has life.

Besides the connexion of virtue with pleasure and pain, we may also be considered to have established the point that both virtue and vice are formed under the same circumstances and continue to act in the field in which they were formed. There are other points on which we have dwelt or touched, namely, the accordance of virtue with reason, the necessity of avoiding excess and defect, and the doctrine of habits: but to these we will return again.

EUDEMUS. I have all along felt a difficulty with regard to the doctrine of habits, which I should like to put into words, in order that you may remove it for me.

ARISTOTLE. You will help us much, if you will do so. For if I can meet your objections, it will go a long way towards establishing the truth. To refute a proposition is the same thing as to establish its contradictory. If you disprove 'A is B,' you prove 'A is not B.'

EUDEMUS. Well, you tell us that we must become just by acting justly, and become temperate by acting temperately. But must not a man already be just and temperate before he can act justly and temperately? If a man complies with the laws of grammar and music, I suppose we would call him a grammarian or musician.

ARISTOTLE. I see your objection. It is not without plausibility. But this is the way in which I meet it. First, I deny what you say even in the case of the arts; secondly, I deny the parallel which you draw between the arts and virtue. I deny what you say even in the case of the arts, for it is possible to produce an artistic result (1) by chance, (2) at the suggestion of another. The first is not a case which is likely to occur, but still it is theoretically possible, and so we must take account of it; the second is common enough. Suppose that Coriscus were to show me a composition which complied with all the laws of grammar and rhetoric; should I think that Coriscus was a grammarian

and rhetorician, if I had the suspicion that he had got Theophrastus to help him? No, it would only prove that there was a grammarian and rhetorician somewhere. The thing would have been done according to reason, but not necessarily with reason. Now, in order to be rightly called a grammarian, you must not only do something grammatical, but do it in the grammarian's way, that is, in accordance with the knowledge of grammar in yourself. It is not the case then, even with regard to art, that the mere outward act is sufficient to constitute a claim to the possession of the mental quality.

But, further, I deny the parallel that you draw between art and virtue. It is true that I have often had occasion myself to call your attention to the close analogy that exists between art and virtue. And in order to do full justice to your case, Eudemus, I will now draw out the chief points in this analogy. Some of them, as I have said, have been already mentioned, and others we may have occasion to advert to again.

(1) To begin with, art and virtue resemble each other in the mode of their acquirement, inasmuch as both result from practice. Both are habits or states, which are formed by a repetition of like acts. But art is a habit of production, while virtue is a habit of action.

(2) Again, both are habits resulting in effects which are in accordance with true reason within oneself.

(3) Art also resembles virtue in this, that it is both produced and destroyed by the same things. In both of them we are met by the apparent anomaly that the same set of outward circumstances may produce opposite results.

(4) This, of course, must be the effect of some inner difference in the agent, some natural bent for art or virtue, which is present in one, while absent from the other. So that we may extend the analogy between art and virtue

to the natural capacity that is required for both. This is a point on which I am never anxious to insist, because our business is confined to doing our best with the material that nature has given us; some might be discouraged who thought that nature had not favoured them. Still truth is better than edification, and it is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that there is some natural difference between man and man. When we say that we are naturally adapted to receive the virtues and perfected in them by practice, we must not be understood to mean that all are naturally adapted in a like degree. There are some who are really more fortunate than others, as being born with a greater capacity for virtue; and the same is true of art.

(5) Yet another point in which the analogy holds good between art and virtue is that both tend to reproduce the same sort of acts out of which they were formed.

(6) Further, as Nicomachus reminded us, art and virtue are both enhanced by the difficulty of their object.

(7) Lastly, art and moral virtue resemble each other in both aiming at the mean, excess and defect being alike fatal to each.

There are all these points in the analogy between art and virtue, and I daresay you yourselves could think of more. But, while allowing all this, I have still to deny that the parallel applies in the present case. For, when we come to examine the products of art and virtue, we find that the analogy breaks down. For the products of art are viewed in themselves without any reference to the motive of the artist. But in judging of a moral act the motive is everything. It is not enough that the external result be of such and such a kind: there is demanded also a certain disposition of mind in the agent. There are three conditions which we may lay down as necessary to an ideally perfect act of virtue—

(1) Knowledge,

(2) Purpose, by which we mean that the act is done for its own sake,

(3) A firm and unalterable disposition of mind.

Let us see how indispensable these are to virtue, and then consider how far, if at all, they are requisite for art.

(1) There can be no virtue in an act which is done by mistake, even though it should happen to be good in itself. If you gave a beggar gold, when you thought you were giving him copper, would you say on discovering your error —‘How generous I am’?

NICOMACHUS. No, I think I should say, ‘What a fool I was !’

ARISTOTLE. Or again, if you felt inclined to admire the courage of a man whom you saw walking unconcernedly along some frightful precipice, would not your admiration vanish if you found out afterwards that he was blind, and did not know that he was in danger?

(2) Purpose is evidently necessary for a right act. You must do the act because it is right: there is no other moral motive. However well a man may behave, if his conduct is due to interested motives, we do not call him virtuous, but prudent or politic, or some other such name.

(3) Lastly, a very noble act may be done in a fit of enthusiasm, and may not be one that its author would perform at any time that the occasion called for it. Sometimes the person himself is surprised to find that he has done it. This detracts from the virtue of the act, as showing it not to proceed from a settled state of mind. Now, if you apply these conditions to art, you will find that the first only is necessary, and that this is the least important in the case of virtue. Take knowledge away indeed and art goes with it, for art, to be art, must be accompanied by reason. Otherwise it is only chance,

however much it may look like art. But the other conditions—I mean purpose and steadfastness of disposition—are utterly beside the mark in estimating a work of art. When you see a beautiful statue or picture, you do not refuse to admire it until you have satisfied yourself that it was produced from a pure love of art. The motive may have been to get money, or even to spite a rival artist: but the work is not therefore the less artistic. Nor again is a given effect less to be admired, if it have been struck off under a flash of inspiration, and be such as the artist is unable afterwards to repeat.

THEOPHRASTUS. I did not like to interrupt you until you had finished speaking of the three conditions. But I failed to follow your meaning when you said that knowledge was the least important in the case of virtue. It seems to me that, if you take away knowledge, purpose must go too, and therefore also steadfastness of disposition.

ARISTOTLE. Undoubtedly you must know what you are doing, else there can be no virtue in it. Knowledge in that sense is all-important: for an act done in ignorance has no moral character at all. And you are also right in thinking that knowledge is implied in the other conditions. But what I meant, when I spoke, was that morality is not so much an affair of the intellect as of the emotions and the will. It is not necessary to understand the why and the wherefore of a right act. If you know that it is right, that is enough. The great thing is to do it.

But while knowledge in this sense is of little or no importance, the other conditions are not of little, but of the whole importance; and these result, mark you, from the frequent performance of virtuous acts. The purpose and the settled frame of mind both spring from this source. You purpose a right act at first because you think it is right, although you may not like it, but eventually you will

purpose it without thinking when habit has become a second nature. Still less then in virtue than in art does the mere outward act guarantee the inward state.

A just or temperate act, externally considered, may be defined as such an act as the just or temperate man would do: but, before we can argue from the rightness of the act to the virtue of the agent, we must know that our three conditions are complied with.

I think that by this time Eudemus will be ready to agree with us that you do acquire virtue by performing acts of virtue. The appearance of paradox that there is about that proposition vanishes the moment we distinguish between virtue as a series of outward acts and virtue as an inner state of the soul. The inner state must be acquired by the performance of the outward act. There is no other way of acquiring it. Talking will not do; though many people seem to imagine that it will. They go to hear lectures on philosophy, and think that in this way they are becoming good, whereas without the act there is not even an incipient tendency to the formation of the state. A patient might as reasonably expect to get well in body by listening very attentively to his doctor without carrying out any of his prescriptions, as these people to become sound in soul by attending a course of philosophy.

LECTURE X

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, II. 5, 6, §§ 1-14]

THE GENUS AND DIFFERENCE OF VIRTUE

As regards the attempt to define virtue, we may be considered so far to have been merely reconnoitring the ground, like a general before he concerta his plan of operations : but it is time now that we should begin formally to work out our definition by means of genus and difference. You know that in defining a thing you have to give such an account of it as will serve to distinguish it from all other things. This sounds, on first hearing, as if it might prove an endless task. But there is a short cut to the goal. Find the things to which the thing required to be defined is most like, and distinguish it from them : then you will *a fortiori* have distinguished it from all other things. To find the things to which a given thing is most like is the same as referring it to a class, which we call in Dialectic giving the genus ; and to distinguish one member of a class from the rest is known as giving the difference. We have then to ascertain the genus and the difference of virtue.

And first as to the genus.

When we speak of the virtue of man we mean, as has been said before, the virtue of the soul. Virtue then is

something in the soul. Now there are only three things in the soul—

- (1) Feelings,
- (2) capacities,
- (3) states.

If I can bring forward arguments to show that virtue is neither a feeling nor a capacity, it will remain that it is a state. This is the exhaustive or exclusive method of argument. I have had occasion to employ it once or twice before.

By a 'feeling' we mean some movement or change in the mind, liable to affect its judgement (though that point does not concern us here), and attended in however slight a degree by pleasure or pain. As instances of feelings you may take appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hate, regret, emulation, pity—in fact, you may run the whole gamut of consciousness.

By a 'capacity' we mean the power latent within us of being affected by feelings. Thus man has latent within him the power of feeling anger, or pity, or pain, which a statue, though it resembles him externally, has not. The existence of a capacity can only be detected when it becomes realised in act. It has no form or colour by which you can recognise it, and can only be known through its sphere and function.

By a 'state' I mean also a power of some kind, but one by which we stand in a good or bad relation to our feelings. For instance, if we feel anger violently or laxly, when an occasion arises which calls for the display of that feeling, we stand in a bad relation to it; but if we feel it moderately, we stand in a good relation. And so on in other cases.

Now, let me prove that neither the virtues nor the vices are feelings.

(1) We are not called good or bad on account of our feelings.

But we are called so on account of our virtues and vices.

∴ The virtues are not feelings.

(2) We are not praised or blamed for our feelings.

But we are praised or blamed for our virtues or vices.

∴ The virtues are not feelings.

The feelings in themselves are morally indifferent. They are the raw material both of virtue and of vice. You do not blame a man for the badness of the material he works on, if it was provided him from elsewhere, but for the way he works on it. Or, to take another illustration, you do not blame a man for the badness of the horse he rides, if it was furnished him by the state, but only for the way in which he rides it. In the same way you do not blame a man simply for having certain desires, but for not exercising a proper control over them. And the same is true of praise.

(3) Feelings, like anger and fear, occur in us without our purposing them.

The virtues are forms of purpose, or, at all events, impossible apart from purpose.

∴ The virtues are not feelings.

(4) We are said to be 'moved' by our feelings.

This term is not used in connexion with virtues and vices: but rather we are said to be of a certain 'disposition.'

∴ The virtues are not feelings.

In this last argument I appeal to the authority of the multitude, as I told you I was always ready to do. Common language recognises a distinction between the virtues and the feelings.

Much the same arguments may be applied to prove that the virtues are not mere capacities of feeling.

- (1) We are not called good or bad, nor are we praised or blamed, on account of our capacities, as it is felt that they are out of our power.
- (2) The capacities also, like the feelings, are unattended with purpose.
- (3) Moreover we have capacities by nature, but we do not become good or bad by nature.

This last point has been amply insisted on before. Since then the virtues are neither feelings nor capacities, it remains that they are states.

In this way we determine the genus of virtue. NICOMACHUS. I quite follow your demonstration, father, if only I understood why you took for granted at starting that there are only three things in the soul. Why should there be only three things? Why not any number of things?

ARISTOTLE. Life is short, my son, and one cannot prove all things at all times. I confess that the initial assumption was borrowed from the course on Dialectic, in which we are accustomed to subdivide the category of Quality under four heads—

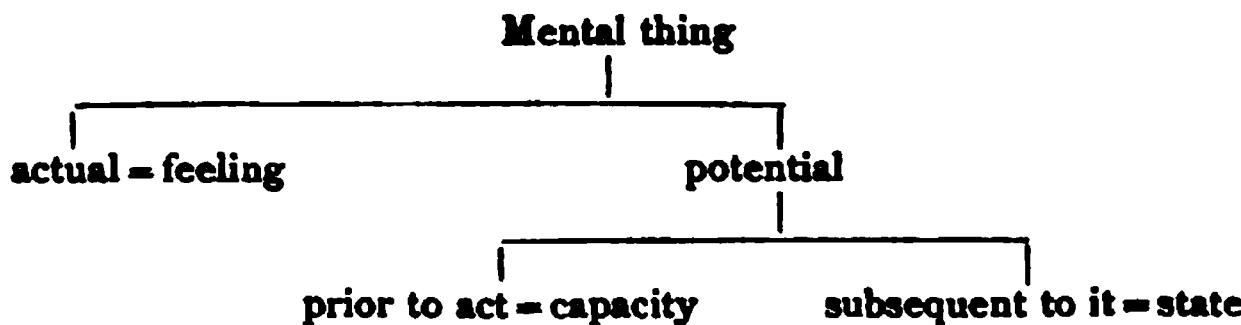
- (1) States and conditions;
- (2) Natural capacities or incapacities;
- (3) Sensible qualities and feelings;
- (4) Forms and shapes, &c.

Now virtue is a quality or 'suchness'; and it is so evidently not a sensible quality, such as sweetness or bitterness, heat or cold, whiteness or blackness, nor yet a form or shape or anything of that sort, such as straightness or crookedness, that I omitted these and confined myself to the things that it was possible for virtue to be.

NICOMACHUS. I am afraid, father, I do not remember all you told us in that course: it was so dry. Do you think you could make it plain to us, apart from all

that, that virtue must be one of the three things you mentioned?

ARISTOTLE. I think I can. You will agree with me that virtue is something in the soul—something mental. Also that anything mental must be either actual or potential. Now the term 'feeling' covers everything actually realised in the soul: it applies to any moment of consciousness whatever. And any potentiality must be either an unformed possibility prior to the act, which we will call a 'capacity' or a formed possibility subsequent to it, which we will call a 'state.' In this way we justify the assumption that virtue is either a feeling, a capacity, or a state.



Let me illustrate the difference between a capacity and a state in a way which will bring it home to you.

When you first joined the gymnasium, you were not very good at athletics, as your ill-health had prevented you from taking part in the usual exercises of the children. The first day you were there you saw Coriscus perform what seemed to you a surprising feat; it was that of turning a complete circle round the bar. Your ambition was aroused, and you determined to emulate him. But when you grasped the bar with your hands, you found that you lay there like a log, and you wondered how any one could ever contrive to get his heels above his head. Still you knew that you had the usual complement of muscles, and therefore the *capacity* to do what others did. So you were not discouraged, but tried and tried again, gaining more

and more control over your limbs by dint of constant practice. At last, by a supreme effort, you performed the feat. Then the capacity had developed for the first time into act. But you were far from being able to count on yourself yet. Though you succeeded one day, you might fail the next. At last, however, practice made perfect. And now you walk about Athens with a formed capacity for turning a complete circle round the bar, whenever you please.

NICOMACHUS. Yes, that has certainly brought the matter home to me, and I begin to understand what you mean by calling virtue a state, and also why it must be a state.

ARISTOTLE. Then we will go on to determine the difference of virtue, and see wherein the praiseworthiness of this mental state consists, and *how* it leads to the best course of action with regard to pleasure and pain.

We may lay down, to begin with, that the virtue, or excellence, of anything has two effects—it makes the thing itself, of which it is the virtue, to be in a good state, and it makes it perform its work well. For instance, the work of the eye is to see, and its virtue is to see well. The eye which has this virtue is in a good state, even when it is closed, and it performs its work well when it is open. Similarly the virtue of a horse makes the horse itself a good horse when it is locked up in the stable, and also makes it good at going and bearing its rider and facing the foe.

Applying this to the case of man, we may say that the virtue of man is *a state in consequence of which he becomes a good man, and in consequence of which also he will perform his own work well.*

This however is still rather general. Indeed, you may perhaps accuse me of beating about the bush, as this is now the third tentative definition that I have given you. So let us come to the heart of the matter. Or rather we

have come to it already, and we need only take up again what we said before when we laid down as a characteristic of virtuous acts that they observe a mean between excess and defect. There are many states in which a man may be with regard to feelings and actions, and many of them are far from praiseworthy: that one only deserves to be praised which exactly attains the mean. This therefore is the difference of virtue—that it attains the mean.

But here we must guard against misconception. For there are two kinds of mean—the absolute and the relative mean. It is necessary to distinguish these, and to say which it is that virtue aims at.

In everything that is continuous and divisible, one can take the more, the less, or the equal, and that either with respect to the thing itself or with respect to us. In either case what we call the equal is a mean between excess and defect. By the equal with respect to us, I mean the just amount. Take for instance this oleander stem. I might cut off from it more than I left behind, or less than I left behind, or exactly the same amount. The last would be the equal with respect to the thing, that is, the objectively equal or half. But suppose I wanted the wood for a definite purpose, say to serve as a walking-stick, the exact half might be too much or too little, and the equal in this case would be just what was equal to my requirements. This is the subjectively equal or right amount.

Now you will understand the difference between the absolute and the relative mean.

The absolute mean is that which is equidistant from either of the extremes, and is one and the same to all persons. Thus 6 is an absolute mean between 2 and 10, for it exceeds and is exceeded by the same amount, namely 4. A series like this,

2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, &c.,

is what is known to the mathematicians as an 'arithmetical progression.' Any term in it, except, from the nature of the case, the first or last, is an absolute mean between the one that comes before and the one that comes after it. The absolute mean is the same thing as the objectively equal. For the difference between 2 and 10 is 8, and 4, by which 6 exceeds and is exceeded, is the half of this.

The relative mean is that which is neither too much nor too little *for us*, and it is not one and the same to all persons. If ten pounds were too much for some one to eat, and two too little, it does not follow that the trainer would order him six: for that might still be too much or too little for his requirements. It would be too little for a Milo and too much for a beginner. The same holds true with regard to exercise in the way of running and wrestling.

THEOPHRASTUS. I notice that you began by speaking only of continuous quantity, whereas the last instance you have chosen is derived rather from discrete quantity. I suppose the doctrine of the mean may be illustrated indifferently from either kind.

NICOMACHUS. Before you answer Theophrastus, father, would you mind explaining the meaning of the terms that you and he are using? As I said before, I do not quite remember the course on Dialectic: I suppose I did not properly grasp it at the time. But I do not wish now to miss following anything.

ARISTOTLE. One of our subdivisions under the category of Quantity is into continuous and discrete. In continuous quantity the parts are all in connexion with one another; in discrete quantity they are separate. You cannot find any two parts in continuous quantity, no matter how near to one another, between which there does not lie some quantity of the same kind, so that continuous quantity is always infinitely divisible, at least in theory. This is not

the case with discrete quantity, for division stops when you reach the units of which it is composed.

EUDERMUS. Can you not go on into fractions?

ARISTOTLE. If you do, you have ceased to divide discrete quantity, for the parts of a unit are not discrete.

NICOMACHUS. Will you give us some instances, father? It will make things clearer.

ARISTOTLE. Well, roughly speaking, this marble pillar will give you a notion of continuous quantity, and this handful of sand a notion of discrete quantity. You see the parts of it are each of them separate from the other. Or again, the physical body with its limbs is an instance of continuous quantity, the body politic with its members an instance of discrete. The parts of the latter are individual citizens, who are so many separate units. If matter really consisted of distinct atoms, as Leucippus said, then it would be as discrete as the handful of sand which I picked up just now. Again, a line, a surface, a body, space itself, and also time are all continuous. On the other hand, number and speech are discrete. Speech consists of so many separate syllables, which are either long or short.

THEOPHRASTUS. Nicomachus must be quite satisfied by this time, so I should like to know whether you had any special reason for laying stress on continuous quantity when you began to explain to us the difference between the absolute and the relative mean.

ARISTOTLE. I was only giving an illustration, and either kind of quantity would have served for this, so that I might just as well have said 'quantity' merely. There were however some reasons which made continuous quantity commend itself to me more at the moment when I spoke. One was that I was seeking to illustrate the mean attained by virtue. This is a mean with regard to feelings and actions. Now both feelings and actions come under the general head of

movement, and movement, while it lasts, is always continuous. Again I said, if you remember, 'continuous and divisible.' Now continuous quantity, being infinitely divisible, must always furnish a mean between excess and defect, whereas discrete quantity does not always. However, we have rather strayed from the point. Let us come back to virtue.

It is of course the relative, not the absolute mean that virtue aims at. The mean we are speaking of is not a stated amount of feeling and action, the same for all persons, as though virtue were a question of arithmetic. It is the mean *relative to us* that virtue seeks and chooses, that is to say, the exact amount of feeling and action that is proper to us on a given occasion, when all our circumstances are duly taken into account. The extreme variability of this mean is one of the causes which render our science as indefinite as it is. What is proper for the master may not be proper for the slave, and what is right and becoming in the woman may be unseemly in the man.

It is a mean of the same kind that art aims at. We have seen so already in the case of the trainer, and you may see it also in the case of the fine arts. What is the highest encomium that you can pronounce upon a work of art, say, for instance, a perfectly modelled statue? Is it not that it is impossible to take from it or add to it without spoiling the effect? If the sculptor had only been aiming at the absolute mean, he might simply have cut his block of marble in two. But his problem was how to leave so much here and take away so much there, as exactly to produce the desired effect, namely, an imitation of the ideal perfection of the human figure.

Now, if art aims at the mean, how much more will virtue aim at it, seeing that, like nature, it is more exact and better than any art?

EUDEMUS. I can feel the truth of what you say about nature and virtue being more exact than art, but I should be glad to have the point made a little clearer.

ARISTOTLE. Well, take any work of nature—this fly, for instance. Every part of it is perfect within and without, even to the minutest portion that can scarcely be detected by the eye. It is not so in art. Art is but the shadow of nature, and every art is limited by the material in which it works. The painter gives you only a coloured surface; the sculptor can give you body, but he carves only the outside and leaves the inside still in the rough. Now virtue, like nature, is more minute, exact, and exacting than art. It requires perfection within and without. It is not content, as we have seen, that the external act should be right, but requires that the internal disposition should be right too. It is enough for the statue to be fair without, but the virtuous man must be fair also within.

In all that I am saying about virtue aiming at the mean, of course you will understand that I am referring only to moral virtue. It is this which has to do with feelings and actions, with which intellectual virtue has no concern. Now the mean, of which we are speaking, is a right amount of feeling and of the action to which it leads. Feeling is a thing of which you can have too much,—or it may be too little—and so it requires to be regulated by reason. But reason is not a thing of which you can have too much: you want, if possible, to be perfectly rational. To apply the doctrine of the mean to intellectual virtue would be to attempt to regulate the regulator: but if we once began that process, there is nothing to prevent its going on for ever. Reason is infallible, if you can only get at it. The difficulty is for its light to pierce through the clouds of passion. But of feeling, as I said, you may have too much or too little. Fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, pleasure,

and pain generally—they may all be felt in excess or defect, and in neither case is perfection attained: but to feel them at the right time and on the right occasions and towards the right persons and from the right motive and in the right way, this is the perfect mean, which is the mark of virtue. What we have said of feeling applies also to action, since every action is prompted by a feeling of some sort. Feeling naturally tends to express itself in act, and does, except in so far as it is restrained by other feelings. This restraint of feeling by feeling is attained by reason giving the preference to one over the other. If we could always let our feelings embody themselves in act in exact proportion to their reasonableness—never too much and never too little—that would be the perfection of conduct. But what would that be but the mean in action? Virtue therefore is a mean of a certain kind, inasmuch at least as it aims at the mean.

Again, look at the matter in this way. There are any number of ways of going wrong, but only one way of going right: for evil belongs to the infinite—to use the figurative language of the Pythagoreans—whereas good belongs to the finite. This is what makes the one so easy and the other so hard. It is easy enough to miss the mark, but it is hard to hit it. For this reason then also we may say that excess and defect belong to vice, but the mean to virtue. For

‘Virtue is one, but vice is manifold.’

NICOMACHUS. My head always begins to swim, father, when I hear of the Pythagoreans: they were so very abstruse.

ARISTOTLE. There is nothing to be alarmed at this time, my son. If you will glance at their parallel series which I drew out for you, you will see that the one which ends in the good begins in the finite, and that the one which ends in evil, begins in the infinite. Nor is this arrangement

without a certain appropriateness. The mind shrinks back from the vague and formless, from the limitless, the indefinite, the infinite. All our ideas of perfection are connected with form, and form is, and must be, finite. The whole progress of the world is a gradual victory of form over matter—a passage from chaos to cosmos.

But to come back to what I was saying. Virtue is a mean in whatever way you look at it. If you choose to represent the matter to yourself under the form of a line, then there is a certain length of action, and of course of feeling too, which is precisely right for you in a given case, having due regard to all the circumstances: anything that falls short of this or goes beyond this becomes vice in the way either of excess or defect. Or, if you prefer to think of it under the figure of a circle, then virtue is the state which exactly attains the mean point or centre, while there are innumerable other states which lead you above or below, around and about, too much to the right or too much to the left. I alter the metaphor on purpose in order that you may not press it, and may remember that it is a metaphor.

LECTURE XI

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, II. §§ 15-20]

THE FULL DEFINITION OF VIRTUE: SOME CRITICISMS ANSWERED

IN the last lecture we saw that virtue was a mean with regard to feelings and actions. But, you will ask me, How is this mean to be attained? There are no unvarying rules to be laid down. I will commit myself to nothing more precise than this, that it must be determined in a given case by the light of reason. Reason is the carpenter that cuts the required length and the archer that hits the mark. If the length is not rightly cut, or the mark is missed, that is not the fault of reason, but of the something else that interferes with reason.

Here however a difficulty arises. For, supposing your reason differs from mine on the subject of what is right, what are we to do then?

EUDEMUS. I thought you said that reason was infallible.

ARISTOTLE. I did say that reason is infallible: but I did not say that what we call 'your reason' or 'my reason' is infallible. By those terms we mean the extent to which either of us is enlightened by reason. Now in the sphere of morals it is unfortunately true that the intellect sees what

the will allows it to. We must therefore appeal from the judgement of the ordinary man to that of the ideally wise man, in whom the light of reason is unclouded by passion. To say then that the mean is determined by reason is the same thing as to say that it is determined by the wise man. So that, putting together all that we have been saying, we arrive at the following definition of virtue—

Virtue is a state of purpose, lying in the mean which is relative to us, which mean is determined by reason, that is to say, by the reason of the wise man.

This is now the second great step towards the attainment of our end. The first was made when we defined happiness. That we found to involve a reference to virtue, so that it became necessary to define virtue. Virtue, as you see, involves purpose. So that there is a third step before us, which is to define purpose.

EUDEMUS. I can account for every other word in the definition. But I don't remember your anywhere proving that virtue was a state 'of purpose.' You proved only that it was a state.

ARISTOTLE. No, I have not proved it—there are some things too obvious to require proof. But I have all along taken it for granted. I did so first when I made purpose one of the three conditions of an act which would entitle the doer of it to be called virtuous; and I did so again in proving that the virtues are not feelings, when I declared that the virtues are forms of purpose or impossible apart from it. Of course virtue is connected with purpose. For purpose is the only thing in the world that is essentially right or wrong. There is no physical act, which may not under certain circumstances conceivably be right. All depends upon the purpose with which it is done. It did not occur to me therefore to prove this point. Still, if you want a formal proof, I will try to give you one.

We have shown already that virtue is a habit or state of mind. Now a state has no meaning except in reference to activities ; it is only realisable in and through them. But activity must assume one of three forms, production, action or speculation, that is, if you employ your mental faculties at all, it must be in making, doing or thinking. Any state therefore must lead to one of these three, and may be said to be a habit either of making, doing or thinking, or, if you like, a state conducive to production, action or speculation. Now, if moral virtue were a habit of making, it would be the same as art, which we know that it is not ; and if it were merely a habit of thinking, it would be indistinguishable from intellectual virtue. It remains, therefore, that virtue is a habit of doing, or a state conducive to action. But to say this is the same thing as to say that it is a state of purpose, for action, in the proper sense of the term, is impossible apart from purpose. We have proved, therefore, that virtue is a state of purpose. This is its proximate genus, whereas 'state' is its genus merely. In giving a definition, it saves trouble to begin with the proximate genus, that is, with the smallest class to which a thing can conveniently be referred. Thus, in defining a square, it is better to begin by saying that it is 'a four-sided figure,' than to say merely that it is 'a figure.'

THEOPHRASTUS. I have heard some of the Megarians attack your doctrine of the mean. They represented you as saying that a little more or a little less of a virtue made a vice ; and maintained that therefore you made virtue and vice to differ in degree only, not in kind, in fact that you established a merely quantitative, and not a qualitative difference between virtue and vice.

ARISTOTLE. If that is what they say of me, I think they scarcely deserve the reputation for dialectic that they have achieved. For the true dialectician should be as careful of

his premisses as of the inferences he draws from them, and above all things should be anxious never to misrepresent an opponent. If I did say that a little more or a little less of a virtue made a vice, their conclusion would be rightly drawn. But I do not say so. What I do say is that a little more or a little less of the same matter or stuff out of which virtue is made, namely, feelings and actions, will make a vice—and that is a very different matter. This still leaves a difference in kind between virtue and vice. Is there no difference in kind between the coat that fits you and the coat that is too large or too small for you? Reason is the tailor that exactly adjusts the cloth to your requirements, so that you feel comfortable yourself, and present an appearance of grace to your fellows. Or, to go back to our former illustration. Is there no difference in kind between the block of marble in the rough and the statue which is hidden in it, and which only the sculptor knows how to find? And yet it might be argued similarly that the difference between them is only one of quantity.

THEOPHRASTUS. In the case of the statue I can see that the difference is one of *form*.

ARISTOTLE. And can you not see the same in the case of virtue? The relative mean is the perfect adaptation of conduct to surroundings, so as to do the thing that is right for you under the circumstances. This is effected by reason imposing form upon the brute matter of feeling. I do not know how to express this better than by the metaphor of the mean, which does not originate with me, but is as old as Theognis, if not older.

THEOPHRASTUS. I remember that in the course on Dialectic you told us that a definition ought not to be metaphorical, and you objected on that ground to Plato's definition of temperance as a harmony.

ARISTOTLE. You have a very good memory, Theophrastus:

indeed it is almost inconveniently good. But I wish you would exert it in remembering the caution I have repeatedly given you about not expecting greater precision than the subject-matter admits of. The perfect definition would not be metaphorical, but we must be content sometimes with imperfect ones. Virtue is not a thing that you can measure with rule or compass. It is something to throw out a metaphor at it that will stick. If a metaphor is grounded on a real analogy, it may prove a truth for all time.

But to come back to the Megarians. Their charge against me of saying that a little more virtue would make a vice is absurd on the face of it. *You cannot have too much virtue.* Take, for instance, the virtue of courage. A man cannot be too courageous. He may be too confident—that is quite a different matter. But courage is the due regulation of confidence and its contrary affection, fear, by the reason ; and of this it is impossible to have too much. So that while I define virtue as essentially a mean, you must remember that, from a moral point of view, it is an extreme, utterly removed from and opposed to vice. To lodge an arrow in the bull's-eye of a target may be said to be hitting the mean, but it is at the same time an *extremely* good shot. Or, to vary the metaphor, we may say that the vertex of an isosceles triangle is a mean between the two angles at the base, inasmuch as it is equidistant from them, but at the same time it is above them both.

NICOMACHUS. Now it is my turn, father. I want to know something about the wise man. To me indeed it will always be enough to consult you upon any point of conduct, or, for that matter, of speculation either. But, supposing we had two wise men, both of them recognised authorities on questions of morality, and that they differed in opinion—what then ?

ARISTOTLE. It is plain that they could not both be right,

though they might both be wrong. The doctrine of the wise man, I admit, cannot be applied in practice, except approximately. There is no wise man to whom we can appeal ; he is ideal and inaccessible, and does not help us in our doubts and difficulties. Still the doctrine embodies a truth for all that. You may regard the wise man as a type of the advancing instincts of mankind. In proportion as we become pure and good, in such proportion do our judgements tend to coincide with the very truth of things.

Now that I have answered your questions more or less successfully, I want myself to guard against one chance of misconception. We have said that virtue is a mean with regard to feelings and actions. You will not think of converting this proposition and saying that every mean with regard to feelings and actions is a virtue. Sometimes it is not moderation but total abstinence that is required. There are certain feelings and certain actions which do not, morally speaking, admit of a mean, for the very good reason that they are themselves extremes. For instance, in the case of feelings, delight in evil, shamelessness, envy ; in the case of actions adultery, theft, murder. We do not ask a man to be moderate in murder or to adapt his adulteries to his social surroundings : rather we request him to abstain from adultery and murder altogether. It is not the excess or defect that is blamed in these cases, but the feeling or act itself. There is no right or wrong as regards the proper person, time, or manner of adultery, murder and so on, but simply to do any of these acts is to do wrong.

EUDEMUS. How does this suit with what you said just now about there being no act which might not conceivably be right ?

ARISTOTLE. If you remember, I used the expression no 'physical act.' But the names of these acts imply an

intention as well. It may be right and proper under certain circumstances to take human life, but it is never right to commit murder. To expect a mean with regard to these things is to apply the doctrine of the mean over again to the extremes. It is asking that there should be a mean, excess and defect of injustice, cowardice, and intemperance, which are themselves either excesses or defects. And so we should have a mean of excess and defect, and an excess of an excess, and a defect of a defect. If this process once begins, there is no point at which it is bound to stop. We might refine for ever as to shades of iniquity ; but they would be all base and blameable. Virtue then is always virtue and vice is always vice. It is not a question of degrees at all. For virtue itself, as I have told you, is in a sense an extreme. It is impossible to have too much temperance or courage ; and also—though this is a hard saying—it is impossible to have too little. For either your impulses are regulated by reason, in which case you are virtuous, or they are not. You may fall short of virtue by more or less, but you cannot have too much or too little virtue. Remember the metaphor of hitting the mark. On the whole, then, you must observe that the doctrine of the mean applies once for all, and cannot be applied over again either to the mean itself or to the extremes.

LECTURE XII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, II. 7]

APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN TO
THE VIRTUES IN DETAIL AND TO TWO QUASI-
VIRTUES: RELATION OF THE TEN VIRTUES TO
THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES: CLASSIFICATION
OF THE VIRTUES ACCORDING TO SPHERE

We have said that virtue is a mean. But it is not enough to make a general statement like this, without verifying it by applying it in detail. In this way the truth of the theory will be brought home to us. In questions of practice general statements may be of wider application, but particular ones have more reality about them. So let us run through the moral virtues, with a view to seeing that, as a matter of fact, every one of them is a mean between vices in excess and defect. We will only briefly enumerate these virtues now with the particular object that I have just mentioned: but afterwards we will dwell upon them separately, in order to give fullness to our conception of virtue. To-day's lecture therefore will supply a sort of table of contents for many lectures that will follow later.

Since moral virtue in general is the control of the feelings and actions by reason, it follows that any particular moral

virtue will be the control of some special class of feelings and actions. This special class of feelings and actions constitutes what we will call the 'sphere' of the virtue. Since every act is prompted by feeling, it is indifferent whether we express the sphere in terms of feeling or in terms of action.

The sphere of the virtue of courage is the feelings of fear and confidence. Courage is a mean state with respect to these. You may have a man who is too ready to expose himself to danger. Such a man is in excess, and therefore not in a virtuous but in a vicious state. And here we may distinguish. His over-readiness to face danger may be due to two causes, to callousness to fear or to excess of confidence. Externally the two characters will closely resemble each other, but internally they will differ. They may act in the same way, but the act will not be prompted by the same feeling in both cases. We have no name for the former character, but the latter we call 'rash.' The man who is in defect as regards exposing himself to danger we call a 'coward.' He unites in himself the attributes that are contrary to those of both the characters that are in excess. He has too much fear and too little confidence.

THEOPHRASTUS. I suppose you might distinguish between two kinds of coward, one who errs from excess of fear and another who errs from defect of confidence.

ARISTOTLE. I was about to do so, when it struck me that it would be an idle subtlety. Indeed I am inclined to regret having distinguished as I did between two characters in excess. The attempt to carry out a similar distinction in the case of the other virtues might prove embarrassing. At all events, it would be more a matter for display of ingenuity than for sober accordance with fact, which is what we are in search of. So let us, if you please, consider what I said to be unsaid; and let us say simply

that the character in excess has too little fear and too much confidence. Courage then is a mean between rashness and cowardice. The sphere of temperance is pleasures and pains, though it is not concerned with all of them, and with the pains in a less degree, and not in the same way as with the pleasures. The excess we will call, for want of a better name, 'intemperance.' It must be understood that the term is used in somewhat of a technical sense. Persons who are deficient in the enjoyment of pleasure hardly ever occur, so that common language has not bestowed a name on them. But let us call them 'stolid.' Temperance then is a mean between intemperance and stolidity.

The sphere of liberality is the giving and receiving of property. The excess and defect are prodigality and illiberality. But they are in excess and defect in an opposite way to one another. For the prodigal is in the excess in parting with his property, and in the defect in receiving, whereas the illiberal man is in the excess in receiving or taking, but in the defect in parting with property. For the present this much will suffice to say about them, as we are only speaking summarily and in outline. We will go into detail later on. Liberality then is a mean between prodigality and illiberality.

There are other states of mind which have, roughly speaking, the same sphere as liberality and its contrary vices, that is, they deal, like them, with property. 'Magnificence' we regard as a virtue. The excess might be called 'extravagance,' only that would hardly serve to distinguish it from prodigality: we had better call it by some such name as bad taste, vulgarity or ostentation. The defect we will call 'shabbiness.' These states differ from the former set in having to do with property on a larger scale. There are also other points of difference, which we

will examine later. Magnificence then is a mean between vulgar profusion and shabbiness.

The sphere of greatness of soul is honour and dishonour. The excess we may call vanity and the defect littleness of mind. Greatness of soul then is a mean between vanity and littleness of soul.

There is another virtue which has the same sphere as greatness of soul, but differs from it in having to do with honour on a smaller scale. It therefore bears the same relation to greatness of soul as liberality does to magnificence. We may express the analogy thus—

As liberality : magnificence :: a certain virtue : greatness of soul.

In small things as in great one may covet honour in the right way or be too eager for it or not eager enough. He who is excessive in his craving for it is called ambitious, he who is defective is called unambitious, while he who hits the happy mean is without a name. The several dispositions of these characters are also nameless, except that the state of mind of the ambitious man is called ambition. Hence we find the characters who are in either extreme putting in counter claims for the virtuous state, which lies as a sort of no man's land between them. Nor has common language quite made up its mind as to the rightful ownership. We sometimes call the person in the mean ambitious, and sometimes we call him unambitious; sometimes we use the term 'ambitious' in a good sense, and sometimes we use 'unambitious.' The reason of this shall be stated in the sequel, but now we must continue our list of the virtues, as we have seen that a proper ambition is a mean between ambition and a disregard for honour.

The control of the temper is the sphere of a virtue and vices which have no very well-defined names. We will call the person who is in the mean 'gentle' and his state of

mind 'gentleness.' Of the two characters who are in the extreme let him who is in the excess be called 'passionate,' and the vice 'passionateness' or 'ill-temper.' The person who is in the defect may be called 'passionless' or 'insensible,' and the defect itself 'a want of passion' or 'insensibility.' Gentleness then is a mean between passionateness and insensibility to anger.

Social intercourse in word and deed is the common sphere of three praiseworthy mental states: but each has its particular sphere within this common one. One of these states is concerned with the true and the other two with the agreeable. Of the latter one has to do with the agreeable in amusement, the other with the agreeable in life generally. It will be as well to speak of these also, that so we may the better convince ourselves that it is the mean in all things that is praiseworthy, while the extremes are neither right nor praiseworthy but blameable. The same want of names from which we have suffered before will again embarrass us here. However we must meet the difficulty by boldly inventing names ourselves, that my meaning may be clear, and that you may be able to follow it.

With regard then to the true in a particular sense, let the man who attains the just mean be called 'truthful,' and the mean state 'truthfulness.' Untruthfulness, if it take the form of exaggerating one's own merits, is called 'boastfulness,' and the man who is in that state of mind is known as a 'boaster'; if, on the other hand, it take the form of detracting from one's own merits, we may as well call it 'self-depreciation,' and the man who possesses the quality a 'self-deprecator.' Truthfulness, then, as a social virtue, is a mean between boastfulness and self-depreciation.

With regard to the agreeable in amusement, the man who is in the mean may be called 'witty,' and his disposition

'wit'; the excess may be called 'buffoonery,' and the man who is in that state a 'buffoon'; for the man who is in defect we can find no better name than a 'boor,' while his state may be called 'boorishness.' Wit then is a mean between buffoonery and boorishness.

With regard to the agreeable in life generally, the man who makes himself pleasant in the way he ought to may be called 'friendly,' and his state of mind 'friendliness.' As for the man who overdoes friendliness, we may distinguish between two cases. If he has no interested motive, he is simply obsequious, but if he has such a motive, he is a flatterer. The man who is in the defect and makes himself disagreeable on all occasions may be set down as quarrelsome and cantankerous.

These are all the moral virtues that I can think of, and every one of them, you see, is a mean between a vice in excess and a vice in defect.

THEOPHRASTUS. No one can deny that you have verified your theory. Indeed, in spite of your warning us that the expression is only metaphorical, I begin now to wonder how one could ever express the essence of virtue as anything but a mean.

ARISTOTLE. The theory may be extended beyond the virtues properly so called. You will find that there are means with respect to the feelings which do not amount to virtues, because they are not states of mind, but which, like virtues, are praiseworthy. So that though virtue is always a praiseworthy mean, it does not follow that every praiseworthy mean is a virtue. Thus, take the feeling of shame. Shame is certainly not a virtue: still you praise the person who has a proper susceptibility to shame, and call him 'modest.' On the other hand you blame the man who is too liable to shame, and call him 'bashful,' while you condemn as 'shameless' the man who is defective in

a sense of shame or unsusceptible of that feeling at all. Thus we may say that modesty is a mean between bashfulness and shamelessness. Then, again, there is the range of feeling which is aroused by the prosperity or adversity of one's neighbours. The man who is capable of indignation feels pain at seeing a base man or a villain prosper ; the envious man is pained at prosperity, quite independently of the question of desert, and this is evidently having too much of a good thing ; on the other hand, the man who delights in evil is so far in the defect of being pained as even to feel pleasure at the prosperity of the wicked. Thus we may say that indignation is a mean between envy and delight in evil.

THEOPHRASTUS. I am afraid my memory is going to prove inconvenient again. But did you not say in the course on Rhetoric that 'the same man who envies also delights in evil,' on the ground that, if a man is pained to see prosperity, he must be pleased at its being destroyed ?

ARISTOTLE. I did. But words should be our servants and not our masters. The quality of which I was speaking then was delight in the evil that happens to others, which we may call 'spitefulness.' Now I am speaking of delight in evil for its own sake, a disinterested but devilish feeling, which makes a man prefer to see a scoundrel succeed. You have only to look at life to see that there is such a thing as this sympathy with evil.

EUDEMUS. You said 'so far in the defect of being pained as even to feel pleasure.' I suppose the defect pure and simple would be the state of mind of the man who is perfectly indifferent as to whether prosperity is deserved or not. Such a man might be supposed to welcome it wherever he found it, just as the glutton is ready to gorge himself on anything.

ARISTOTLE. That is quite true, and a very acute remark.

But we will have an opportunity of discussing these questions later.

NICOMACHUS. You gave us ten moral virtues, father—I counted them as you went along—and two quasi-virtues, and yet you never said a word about justice!

ARISTOTLE. On the contrary, I have said a great deal about it, since in one sense it is not a virtue distinct from the rest, but the exercise of virtue generally towards your fellow-man. In another sense it is a virtue with a sphere of its own. However, I am reserving the whole subject for separate treatment after we have reviewed the other moral virtues in detail, and before we go on to speak of the intellectual virtues.

EUDEMUS. It would greatly interest me to know how you would reconcile your list of virtues with the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice, which people seem to have been content with hitherto. Or perhaps I ought rather to ask you whether you would reconcile it?

ARISTOTLE. Wisdom I am holding in reserve, because it is an intellectual virtue. But it lies at the base of all moral virtue, which is impossible without it. Courage and temperance figure conspicuously in our list; and as to justice, I have just explained my view of that in reply to Nicomachus. So you see that we recognise all the four cardinal virtues.

EUDEMUS. Yes, but our list contains a great many more good qualities, and it is that which troubles me.

ARISTOTLE. It is not my business to defend the fourfold division. But, if one were challenged to make the tenfold list of moral virtues tally with it, I suppose one might say that the remaining good qualities are made up by different blends of the four cardinal virtues applied to the control of particular feelings and lines of conduct. Wisdom, as

I have said, is inseparable from them all: so we need not mention it in every case. You can see that there is an element of courage in liberality, as there is certainly an element of cowardice in its contrary. The element of courage is still more conspicuous in greatness of soul, but that quality implies the presence of all the virtues, as we shall see when we come to treat of it. Gentleness would go down under the head of temperance used in a large sense, so as to include the control of the temper as well as of the appetite. The social virtue of truthfulness is manifestly a form of wisdom not unmixed with temperance, and containing also an element of justice and, in a sense, of courage. As for the quasi-virtues, modesty evidently leads to temperance, whence some have attempted to define temperance under that head, while indignation is a constituent of justice, especially of that form of it to which we shall give the name of 'distributive justice.'

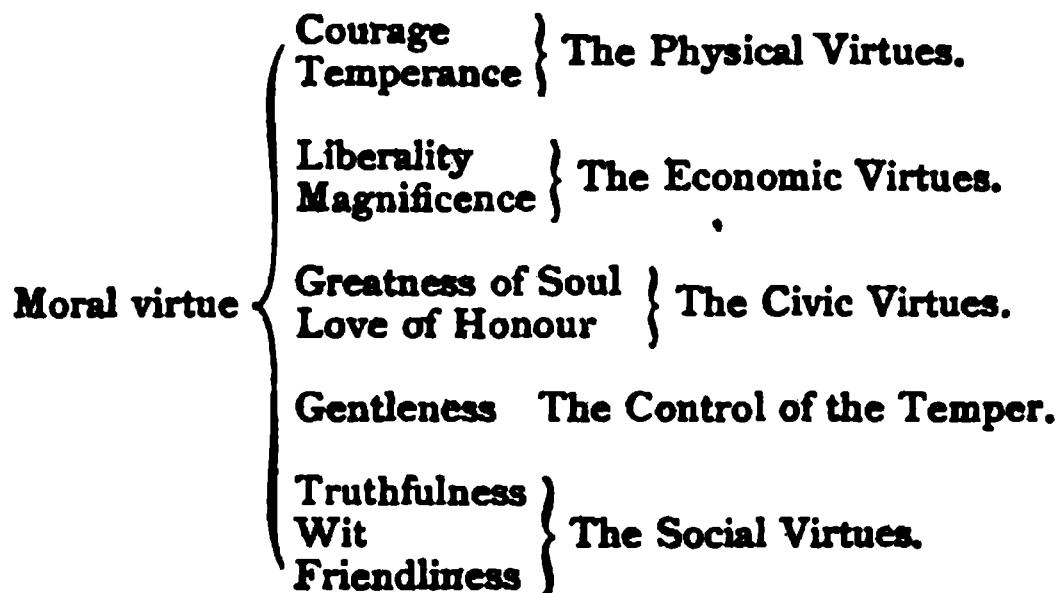
There now—Eudemus! I did not like to put you off without an answer, as your question was a reasonable one. But you have led me into a procedure which is the reverse of that which I would naturally have chosen. My constant aim is to lead you to give definiteness to your thoughts by fixing them upon the well-marked features of things, instead of catching at resemblances, which impart an air of generality at the cost of vagueness.

THEOPHRASTUS. Did you follow any definite order in giving us the list of moral virtues? Or did you simply mention them as they occurred to you?

ARISTOTLE. I have hatched many chickens before now, but I never had such a pecking brood as you. No one ever asked me that question before. I seem to feel vaguely that there is a sort of natural fitness in the order in which the moral virtues are wont to present themselves to my mind. It is possible that we might find some principle

underlying it, if we were to search for it. But you must allow me time before I answer your question. First of all, let us divide them into groups, in order to facilitate your remembrance of them, though you indeed, Theophrastus, seem to stand in little need of aids to memory. It will be useful however to do so, as perhaps then the principle will become apparent both to you and to myself. We began with the two cardinal virtues of courage and temperance. These seem to have a natural affinity for one another, as they are both perfections of the animal nature of man. Let us class them together under the title of the Physical Virtues. Next, we have a pair of virtues which deal with property. We will call them the Economic Virtues. This pair is followed by another pair, which have to do with the esteem of one's fellow-citizens, which is known as honour. They may therefore fitly be called the Civic Virtues. Gentleness we will let stand by itself under the title of the Control of the Temper. Our list closes with a set of three virtues, which deal more especially with the conduct of social intercourse, so that we may call them pre-eminently the Social Virtues.

Let me draw out a scheme which will present this disposition of the virtues to the eye. It consists, as you will see, of five compartments.



LECTURE XIII

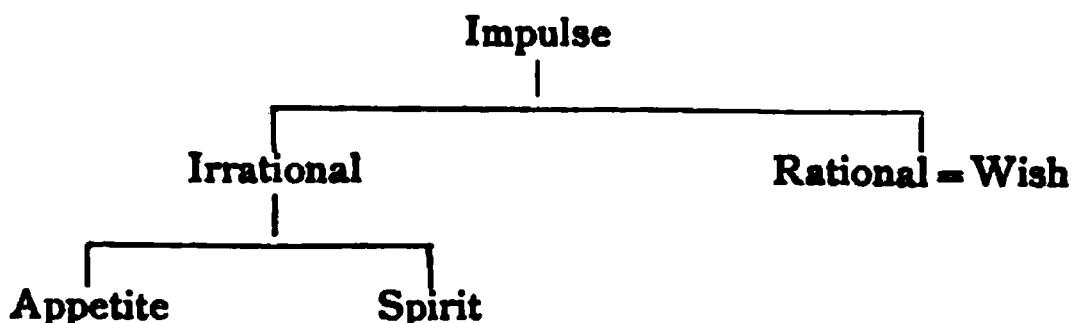
[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, II. 7-9]

ORDER OF THE VIRTUES : THE RELATION OF THE EXTREMES TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE MEANS : PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ATTAINING THE MEAN

Now, Theophrastus, I think I am more ready than I was at the last lecture to satisfy your craving for a rational order in the list of the virtues. But first it will be necessary to premise some points, that we may the better understand each other.

Reason is the guiding and controlling, but not the motive power in man. It is a thinking faculty: but if man is to act, he must be impelled thereto by something other than reason. This something else we call feeling or passion. I should like to give the name 'craving' to this reaching out of the soul after a good of some kind: but that would sound strange to your ears. The word 'impulse' will do, if you are careful to think of the impulse as coming from within, not from without. The object of desire draws, it does not push you. It is thus that God attracts into his own likeness: but that is a subject too deep for our present purpose. Now impulse may be divided into two kinds, the irrational and the rational. The rational kind we will call 'wish.' The irrational may be broadly summed up under the two heads of 'appetite' and 'passion.' This last term is unfortunately ambiguous. We have used it already as

equivalent to feeling in general. But we are now using it to signify the source of love and hate. Anger comes under it, but that is too narrow a term: perhaps 'spirit' would do better. I know we shall have a difficulty with it whatever word we use, so think rather of the definition than of the name. It is, as I have said, the source both of love and of hate. When I say it is the source of love I am not referring to the sexual instinct. That is a form of appetite, like hunger and thirst. But it differs from them in this. Hunger and thirst are implanted in us by nature for the preservation of the individual, this other form of appetite is implanted in us for the preservation of the race. Man might neglect his own body, if it were not for the pleasures of eating and drinking and the pains of hunger and thirst; he might also neglect to replenish the race, if he were not tempted thereto by the pleasures of love. Nature has her own ends which she leads us to pursue, while we fancy that we are pursuing ours. Appetite has always pleasure, or immediate gratification, for its object, whereas the object of wish is what is good for one in the long run, or at least what one imagines to be so. Appetite will prompt you to partake of dainty dishes; the wish to get well may suggest your taking physic. Wish is thus a more far-seeing principle than appetite or anger, both of which rush blindly to their own gratification. Look at the scheme I am drawing for you—



and conceive of man henceforth as a puppet worked by three strings. You pull the string of appetite, and you see

him rushing to gratify his carnal desires ; you pull another string, and you see him soothed by affection or blinded by rage ; yet another string, and he proceeds calmly to compass what he conceives to be his highest good.

It is time now to return to the virtues.

If you should ever be called upon, Theophrastus, to give a reason for the way in which the moral virtues are arranged in our list, you may say that in their arrangement there may be traced—

- (1) a progress from below upwards ;
- (2) a progress from within outwards.

We will first look at the progress from below upwards.

In beginning with the physical virtues we are beginning at the base of the scale, since man's animal nature underlies his moral and intellectual. Courage and temperance deal with the two irrational impulses, which we have called spirit and appetite. If your appetites are perfectly in accordance with reason, you possess the virtue of temperance ; if your spirit allies itself with reason in facing danger, you possess the virtue of courage. Some semblance of these virtues may be possessed by the brutes, some of whom we regard as courageous and temperate, others as cowardly and gluttonous. We say also that a horse is a spirited animal and that a deer lacks spirit.

Again these two virtues deal with the love of pleasure and the fear of pain, the two feelings which lie at the root of all sentient existence. Courage teaches us to endure pain, which we naturally shun, and temperance backs up the lesson by teaching us to abstain from pleasure, which we naturally seek. In this way this pair of virtues may be seen to be complementary to one another.

Now what do the next two virtues deal with ? They deal with property. The impulse to accumulate property, that is, to lay by against a rainy day, has nothing in common

with spirit, still less with appetite, which would prompt one to gobble up everything at once. Therefore it comes from the rational desire for good, which we have denominated 'wish.' Here then we have entered upon a higher plane. The lower animals do not possess property, or, if they do, it is in a very rudimentary way. Man indeed may be defined as an acquisitive animal, or an animal that gets property.

The next pair of virtues deals with honour. Honour, like property, is an external good, since it does not depend upon one's own will, but it is a good of a finer nature than the other. Here then we enter again upon a higher plane than before.

Then comes the virtue of gentleness, which we have allowed to stand by itself. The control of the temper is not an external good, like property and honour, but an internal good. It is a greater victory to master oneself, as I endeavoured to persuade one pupil who shall be nameless, than to conquer the whole world, and a greater good than to receive honour from all men. Here therefore we are again upon a higher plane than before.

And notice further that this virtue stands in a very significant position, at the threshold of the social virtues. No man is fitted to move among his fellows with grace and dignity, unless he has his temper well under control.

The three virtues which remain put the final polish upon a man in his dealings with others. Truthfulness is the social excellence of not offending those with whom you converse by an exaggerated statement of your own merits or on the other hand by a mock humility. Wit and friendliness impart grace and sweetness to hours of relaxation and to all the relations of life.

So much then for the progress from below upwards. Now let us turn to the progress from within outwards.

The physical virtues, though, like all moral virtue, they have their social aspect, are at the same time pre-eminently individual and self-regarding, as being essential to life. They are virtues which might be practised by Philoctetes during his sojourn on his lonely island. But how could Philoctetes be liberal or magnificent to himself? These virtues at once imply relations to others. Neoptolemus must visit him, to whom he may offer a share of his scanty victuals, before he can be liberal. Still more essentially social are the virtues which have to do with the esteem of one's fellows. For while a man may be liberal to one, he desires honour from all. The social bearings of the remaining virtues have already been touched upon, and it is unnecessary to repeat what has been said before. In this way then we trace a progress from within outwards as well as a progress from below upwards.

THEOPHRASTUS. I had rather take my stand upon the progress from below upwards, as there each step seems more definitely marked. But I am afraid I might be met with this difficulty. Somebody might say to me, 'Do you really think, Theophrastus, that the control of the temper is so much higher a virtue than temperance, or the control of the appetite, that you set it in the fourth place above it? I imagined you were of opinion that "it is harder to contend against pleasure than against anger," and this would seem to show that temperance is a higher virtue than gentleness.' I don't know what I should be able to say to such a person, for I certainly assented to Nicomachus when he laid down the principle that difficulty enhances virtue, especially as that principle was guarded by you.

ARISTOTLE. I think you will be quite able to hold your own in argument, Theophrastus, and I shall leave you to settle matters with the antagonist yourself. I did my best to oblige you by reading some order into the list of virtues.

But, after all, the arrangement of the virtues is not a matter of any vital importance. Every one is free to arrange them as he pleases.

NICOMACHUS. I suspect, father, you were looking at the virtues more from the point of view of the state when you arranged them as you did. The physical virtues are essential to the bare existence of the state, the economic virtues to the comfort of the state, the civic virtues to the cohesion of the state, and the rest to the moral welfare and beauty of the state.

ARISTOTLE. Perhaps I was, my son. At all events we may retain the order as being at least as convenient as any other. So let me now draw you out a full scheme of the virtues and vices. It will come in useful presently, when we dwell upon the virtues in detail. (See table, p. 118.)

There are a few more words to be said before we quit the doctrine of the mean.

Since virtue lies in a mean between two extremes, it may be considered to be opposed to both of them, and they in their turn may be regarded as opposed both to one another and to the mean. Just as the equal is greater as compared with the less, and less as compared with the greater, so the mean states are in excess as compared with the defects, and in defect as compared with the excesses, both in feelings and in actions. Thus the brave man is less ready to face danger than the rash, but more ready to face it than the coward, and similarly the temperate man is less ready to enjoy pleasure than the intemperate, but more ready to do so than the stolid, and again the liberal man is less ready to give and spend than the prodigal, but more ready to do so than the illiberal. And therefore we often find the man who hits the happy mean abused by both the extreme characters, who thrust him off on one another, so that you will hear the coward call

THE TEN MORAL VIRTUES.

Defect.	Mean.	Excess.	Sphere.
Cowardice	Courage	Rashness	Fear and confidence
Stolidity	Temperance	Intemperance	Pleasure and pain
Illiberality	Liberality	Prodigality	Property
Shabbiness	Magnificence	Vulgar profusion	
Littleness of soul	Greatness of soul	Vanity	Honour and dishonour
Want of ambition	Proper ambition	Ambition	
Gentleness	Passionateness	Passionateness	Anger
Truthfulness	Boastfulness	Boastfulness	The true
Self-depreciation	Wit	Buffoonery	In amusement
Boorishness	Friendliness	Obsequiousness	The agreeable
Quarrelsomeness		or Flattery	In life generally

THE TWO QUASI-VIRTUES.

Shamelessness	Modesty	Shame
Delight in evil	Indignation	The fortunes of others

the brave man rash, and the rash man call him a coward, and so on in other cases. But this abuse from both sides is the highest form of compliment. Now while there is this opposition between all the states, which of them ought we to consider to be the *contraries* of one another? By 'contraries' are meant those things which are most remote from one another under the same head. Thus black and white are considered contraries, because they are furthest removed from one another under the one head of colour. This way of speaking is a metaphor from space. In space 'up' and 'down' are contraries, and they are in a literal sense the furthest removed from one another. The earth, as you know, occupies the centre of space. Now the centre is the point most remote from the circumference. The earth is down, the extremities of space are up. Motion towards the earth we call 'downward,' and motion towards the extremities 'upward.' But to come back. Are we to consider that the mean is contrary to both the extremes, or rather that the extremes are contrary to one another? It would seem that though virtue is contrary to vice as a whole, yet that a given vice may be more opposed to another than it is to its opposite virtue, just as in the circle or sphere, though the centre is furthest removed from the circumference as a whole, yet, if you take any given point on the circumference, you can find another which is twice as far from it as the centre is. Hence, when we want to express the extremity of opposition, we talk of 'wide as the poles apart.' Again, the angles at the base of an obtuse-angled isosceles triangle are more remote from one another than either of them is from the vertical angle, which may be regarded as a mean between them. On this way of looking at the matter we ought to say that, in the case of moral states, it is the vices in excess and defect that are, strictly speaking, contrary to one another.

This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that there is sometimes a likeness between one of the extremes and the mean, whereas the extremes are utterly unlike one another. Thus rashness has a sort of natural resemblance to courage and prodigality to liberality.

And this leads me on to remark that, while both extremes are opposed to the mean, one of them is sometimes more opposed to it than the other. Sometimes this is the case with the defect and sometimes with the excess. Thus cowardice, which is the defect, is more opposed to courage than rashness, which is the excess; while, on the other hand, intemperance, which is the excess, is more opposed to temperance than is the defect, which we have named stolidity.

If we inquire why this is so, we shall find that it arises from two causes, one of them rooted in the nature of the thing itself, the other in our nature.

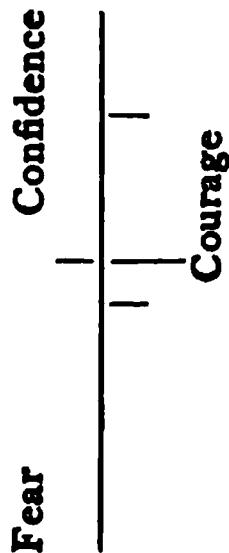
(1) Sometimes one of the extremes is nearer to and more like the mean than the other. Thus rashness and prodigality have a kind of affinity to courage and liberality, whereas their contraries, cowardice and illiberality, are alien to it altogether. You might make a rationally brave or liberal man out of the rash or prodigal much more easily than you could out of the coward, the niggard, or the thief. Hence we naturally regard cowardice and illiberality as more opposed, or more nearly contrary, to courage and liberality than rashness and prodigality are.

(2) Again the extreme, to which we have a greater natural tendency, is, for us, more opposed to the mean than its contrary is. For instance, we are all of us rather too much addicted to pleasure, and are more prone to intemperance than to sobriety, and therefore *a fortiori* more so than to stolidity or insensibility to pleasure. Hence, for all practical purposes, intemperance may be

regarded as more opposed to the mean than its rarely-occurring contrary.

NICOMACHUS. Does it not sound a little paradoxical, father, first to say that virtue is a mean, and then to say that one of the extremes is nearer to it than the other?

ARISTOTLE. I grant that it sounds so, my son. It is the inevitable penalty of using a metaphor that it is liable to be pressed against you. There would be a contradiction in reality, and not merely in appearance, if we had ever said that virtue is a quantitative mean. To say that would amount to saying that any given virtue must be equidistant from the two vices which proceed from the excess and defect of the same feeling that the virtue in question keeps in due control. But this we have been always careful not to say. On the contrary we have insisted on the relativity of the mean, that it is the amount which is right for us. There is no necessity for this to be exactly intermediate between the maximum and the minimum. Courage is no halfway house between a fatuous confidence and a craven fear. It is the due admixture of fear and confidence which is proper for a being like man. Now fear is only in place on rare occasions, whereas the good man should be habitually confident. Hence the mean for us will contain a great deal more of confidence than of fear. We may figure this to our minds under the image of a line thus:—



Or, that you may not attach any importance to the image, except in so far as it serves to illustrate, let us liken courage to a generous draught duly attempered to the taste of man, instead of consisting in equal measures of the wine of confidence and the water of fear.

EUDEMUS. You gave it as your decision that the extremes were to be considered the direct contraries of one another, rather than that the mean was the contrary of both. But is it not the case that the mean is incompatible with either of the extremes, whereas the extremes are compatible with one another? May not the same man combine in himself opposite vices, and so be wrongly irregular? For I suppose we may say that virtue is rightly irregular, the extremes being in a certain sense contained in the mean, just as a harmony may be made up of discords.

ARISTOTLE. Your language, I think, is more ingenious than exact. But let that pass. I will deal rather with the point you have raised, which is certainly an interesting one. It is the case that extremes meet. The blusterer may be a coward at heart, the man who is prodigal of his own property may be covetous of another's, and extreme simplicity may have a touch of swagger. But though extremes meet, they meet in the concrete and not in the abstract. Rashness as a quality has no resemblance to cowardice, readiness to give must always be distinct from proneness to take, and though ostentation may assume the garb of simplicity, yet ostentation is not simplicity nor simplicity ostentation. I do not think therefore that there is anything in what you say to make me retract my judgement that the extremes are contrary to one another rather than the mean to the extremes, that is, that they are wider apart from one another than the mean is from either of them. It is true that both of them are vices, whereas the mean is a

virtue, but vice being infinite, you cannot argue that two things are near, because they are both contained in that class.

We have now shown that moral virtue is a mean, and what sort of mean it is, and that it is a mean between two vices, one in excess and the other in defect, and further it has become apparent in what sense it is a mean, namely, in that it hits off the mean both in feelings and in actions. If the metaphor had no other merit, it would at all events serve to show how hard it is to be good. Consider how difficult it would be for any one to hit upon the exact centre of a circle, if he did not possess the requisite mathematical knowledge! It was not without reason that Pittacus said 'It is hard to be good.' Any one can lay his finger on *some* point in the circle, but to find the centre—there is the problem! In the same way any one can feel anger and give or spend money: but the right person and the right amount, and the right time and the right motive and the right manner—to satisfy all these conditions is far from being in the power of any one. And so, when they are satisfied, our praise is unstinted, so rare and beautiful is such moral excellence.

Now let me conclude by giving you some practical hints, which may aid you in endeavouring yourselves to attain the mean.

(1) First of all, avoid that extreme which is in its own nature more opposed to the mean. Choose Scylla rather than Charybdis, which will wreck you altogether, following the advice of Calypso—

'Steer wide thy bark of all this seething surf.'

NICOMACHUS. Wasn't it Circe who said that, father?

ARISTOTLE. I believe it was, my son, now you mention it. You are fresher from your Homer than I am.

THEOPHRASTUS. I think you will find that it was neither Circe nor Calypso, but Ulysses who said these words to his pilot. He was repeating what Circe had said to him in a slightly different form.

ARISTOTLE. Thank you. It is well to be accurate, though the point does not affect the illustration. Of the two extremes one may be worse and more erroneous than the other. And, when this is the case, if you cannot hit the mean exactly, it is well to take the lesser evil, as your 'second sailing.'

NICOMACHUS. I have often heard that phrase, father : but I can't say I ever rightly understood it.

ARISTOTLE. Well, what pleases the mariner best is to be scudding along in the Aegean before a favouring breeze. But, if the wind drops, and a dead calm comes on, what must he do then? Why, put out his oars and row.

(2) But to come to my second point. Avoid that extreme to which you personally are more inclined ; and even go for a time into the opposite extreme. Men are not all of the same disposition by nature : some are more prone to err in one direction and some in another. We must keep a sharp look-out on our besetting sins, and determine to avoid them at all hazards. We can recognise what they are by the pain or pleasure attendant upon particular acts. And, having found what our personal proclivity is, we must give ourselves a good tug in the opposite direction. Happily in this way we may eventually come into the mean, just as a warped piece of wood may be set straight by being given a bend in the opposite direction. Thus, if you find in yourself an inclination to niggardliness, launch out for a time into a course of extravagance ; if, on the other hand, your weakness lies in the way of prodigality, a dose of meanness may be good for you.

(3) My third hint to you is this. Above all things beware of being misled by pleasure. Pleasure is the most dangerous, because the most insidious, foe to virtue: she bribes our verdict. We must treat her then as the elders would fain have treated Helen. You remember how Priam and the other old men were sitting on the tower at the Scaean gates, when Helen came before them in all her beauty. They admitted that she was a miracle of loveliness, and said it was no marvel that men should fight and die for her: but all the same they thought that she had better go away in the ships, and not stay as a bane to themselves and to their children. That is how we should treat Pleasure —acknowledge her beauty and send her away. It is not necessary to be rude to her or denounce her as a strumpet: but, when Virtue bids, we must renounce her.

Such, my son, and you, Theophrastus and Eudemus, is the advice I have to give you with regard to the attainment of the mean. I know that it is easier to give advice than to follow it. For advice is general, but the application of it is a question of particulars. How hard for instance to know exactly how and with whom, and on what sort of occasions, and for what length of time, the feeling of anger is right and justifiable! Even in the case of others we cannot quite make up our minds. How much less therefore in our own! Sometimes we praise those who are really in the defect in this regard, and call them 'gentle'; sometimes we erroneously give the name of 'manly' to persons who would more correctly be described as harsh-tempered. When the divergence from the mean is slight in either direction, it fails to attract our notice: it is only when it becomes glaring that we condemn it. Nor is it possible to lay down in so many words what amount of anger is right and proper or where error begins: a man must use his own common-sense to decide for himself on a given

occasion. All casuistical argument is cut short by the simple fact that the question is one of feeling. This much however is clear that in all cases it is the mean state that is praiseworthy, though it may be our duty to swerve aside sometimes towards the excess and sometimes towards the defect, in order that we may the more easily attain to the perfection of the mean.

LECTURE XIV

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 1, §§ 1-12]

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY ACTS: INVOLUNTARY ACTS DUE TO COMPULSION OR IGNORANCE: DEFINITION OF A COMPULSORY ACT

Now we are ready to enter upon the third great step towards the prosecution of our design. We defined happiness—that was the first step. Happiness we found to consist mainly in virtue. So we defined virtue—that was the second step. Virtue depends mainly upon intention or purpose. So we must define purpose—that will be the third step. The attempt to take it may lead us into deeper waters than we have yet had to ford, and we must beware of being swept away by the current. But if I am careful not to get out of my own depth, perhaps I may succeed in enabling you also to keep your heads clear and above water. So far as is possible, I will let you understand the reasons for each step: but, if my method should not be on all points clear to you, you must put faith in my guidance, until you are able to look back for yourselves upon the completed journey.

Well, our object is to define purpose. Purpose is an inner principle, and inner principles are hard to get at. So we will let purpose itself alone for the present, and look rather at its outward and visible result. This is better

known to us. By the 'outward and visible result of purpose' I mean what is commonly called an act done on purpose. Let us endeavour to define this.

An act done on purpose is a species of voluntary act. It will be well therefore first to define what we mean by a voluntary act. If we have a clear conception of the genus, it will help us to determine the species.

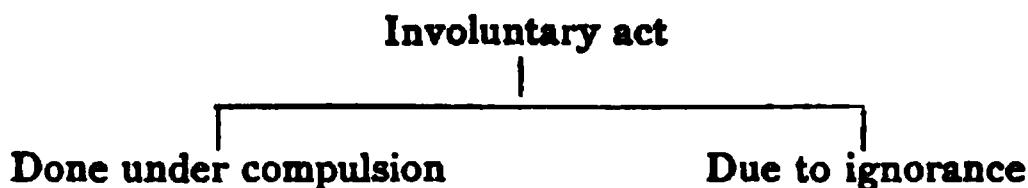
Apart from its subservience to our immediate design, the examination of the subject of voluntary agency will fit in admirably with the general aim of these lectures, both from the narrower point of view of ethics, or the science of conduct, and from the wider point of view of statecraft, or the science of happiness, of which, as I have explained to you, the former is a branch. For look at the matter in this way.

Virtue is concerned with feelings and actions, and virtue we have declared to be a praiseworthy state. Now praise and blame are attached only to such actions as are considered voluntary; in other words, it is only such actions that have a moral character at all. It is therefore plainly necessary for the moralist to distinguish between the voluntary and the involuntary.

Again, from the practical point of view of the statesman, whose object is to make men good, it is highly useful to have a clear view of the distinction, with a view to the proper assignment of rewards and punishments. From time immemorial lawgivers have dealt a different measure of justice to offences, according as they considered them voluntary or involuntary. We may even go beyond the written law, and say that this is part of the unwritten law of nature and of the custom of mankind. Has a man committed an offence voluntarily? There is anger and punishment in store for him. Can it be shown that he has committed it involuntarily? There is pardon and sometimes pity.

We want then to define a voluntary act. But perhaps we had better begin by looking at involuntary acts. If we know what they are, we shall arrive at the voluntary by way of contrast with them.

There are two cases in which an act is universally recognised as being involuntary; the first is, if it be done under compulsion, the second, if it be due to ignorance. This is a division, of course, that I am giving you now, and not a definition. A definition must be general, and not disjunctive.



We will examine first the kind of acts that are recognised as involuntary on the ground that they are done under compulsion.

You may take this as a definition of a compulsory act. *A compulsory act is one of which the efficient cause is external, being such that the agent, or rather the patient, contributes nothing thereto.* I said advisedly 'the agent, or rather the patient.' For the so-called 'acts,' which are done under compulsion are not really done at all but suffered. The efficient cause in such acts lies outside of the apparent agent, who is played upon like a puppet. If you are carried off by main force by the enemy, you are not accused of deserting the army; and, if you are blown over a precipice by a high wind, no jury will bring in a verdict of *felo de se*. An act to be my act must come from my will, and physical force cannot affect the will. Wild elephants cannot make a baby will to move its little finger. Man has an impregnable citadel in his own will, wherein he is safe from all the assaults of violence.

Now, turning for a moment to the other kind of acts

which are considered involuntary, I mean those which are done in ignorance of their real nature, it is easy to see that in such cases the act itself is voluntary enough, for you can only be said to do as much as you intended to do. Hence, on a strict view of the case, there are no such things as involuntary acts : all acts whatever are voluntary. 'Involuntary act' is in fact a contradiction in terms.

NICOMACHUS. But surely, father, if a tyrant had you in his power, and threatened to put you to death, unless I did some wrong or disgraceful act, you wouldn't say that such an act on my part was voluntary ! Or again, when Aristippus, being afraid of pirates, threw his bag of gold overboard, you wouldn't say that he did that voluntarily !

ARISTOTLE. You need not be so impetuous, my son. I was coming to your difficulty. In the strict sense of the terms, as I was saying, there is no such thing as an involuntary act. But, in view of the practical importance of the distinction drawn between voluntary and involuntary acts, we must not be sticklers for mere logic. Undoubtedly a person may be driven from a variety of motives to do acts which run counter to his natural inclination, and there is a temptation to call such acts 'involuntary.' I would prefer myself to call them 'mixed acts.'

Mixed acts are such as proceed not from physical, but from moral compulsion. Moral compulsion, unlike physical, *has* power to act on the will. So that in the case of these acts the agent does contribute something : for he contributes the consent of his own will. And this makes the efficient cause internal, so that such acts fail altogether to satisfy our definition of the compulsory. I have called them mixed acts as though they were partly voluntary and partly involuntary—involuntary as being acts such as no one under ordinary circumstances would do, but voluntary as proceeding from the will of the agent under pressure of circum-

stances. But if you look closely into these acts, you will find that they are really voluntary. Let me give you two reasons for thinking so.

(1) They are choiceworthy at the time when they are done.

(2) There is no physical compulsion about them.

Aristippus preferred that his bag of gold should go overboard than that he should be murdered for the sake of it. And again he walked up to it of his own accord and with his own hands pitched it over the gunwale. So that, after all, I *do* say that he did that act voluntarily. I say also that it was a very right and proper thing for him to do, and there would be no meaning in my saying that, if the act were involuntary. It is only in the abstract that mixed acts are involuntary. But as acts do not take place in the abstract, it is what they are in the concrete that counts. The essential voluntariness of mixed acts is proved further by what I have already hinted at, namely, the fact that they are praised or blamed. From this point of view—I mean from a moral point of view—we may roughly divide mixed acts into four classes—

- (1) Those which deserve praise,
- (2) Those which deserve blame,
- (3) Those which admit of excuse,
- (4) Those which admit of no excuse.

The fourth class really comes under the second. Still we will let it remain as a receptacle for acts of the worst character.

Penelope has won everlasting renown by an act which in itself was of dubious merit—I mean her deception of the suitors: but we consider her to have been justified by her motive, which was fidelity to her absent lord. Deception, however, under ordinary circumstances is simply the mark of a base mind. Again, when Agamemnon sacrificed his

daughter, we may excuse him for the act on the ground that it was represented to him as being for the good of Greece. But the same cannot be said of Orestes' murder of his mother. Indeed it may be questioned whether any excuse could ever be pleaded for matricide. As for the motives which are said to have 'compelled' Alcmaeon in Euripides into the crime, they are simply ridiculous. There are some acts which one should rather die than do, and die too, if need be, under the most horrible tortures.

But of two evils it is often difficult to decide which to choose, and still more difficult to abide by one's decisions. Especially is this the case when the choice is between a physical and a moral evil; and hence praise and blame are thrown into the scale, in order to help men to a right decision. But there are cases which prove too much for poor human nature even with these aids. In such cases we may say with truth that a man was morally compelled into such and such an act; and apart from questions of right and wrong, we may say the same when the motives to an act are such as no one would be likely to resist. Thus you are morally compelled to leave a friend's table, if you hear that your house is on fire.

It is plain now from what we have been saying that mixed acts are not compulsory in the sense in which we have defined that term. Abstractedly indeed and in themselves they may be said to be involuntary, but at the given time and as an alternative to other things they come from the choice and will of the individual. They are therefore really voluntary, for acts take place under particular circumstances, and these are voluntary.

THEOPHRASTUS. I do not know what you mean by saying that the circumstances are voluntary.

ARISTOTLE. Nor do I. It was a slip of the tongue. I meant that they are such as to render the act voluntary.

NICOMACHUS. Could you give us some rules, father, about mixed acts, in the same way as you did about the attainment of the mean?

ARISTOTLE. I would not attempt such a task, my son. Remember what I was saying to you at the close of my last lecture. Taking place, as they must, under particular circumstances, and circumstances being infinitely various, no two cases of mixed acts are ever precisely alike.

THEOPHRASTUS. I have heard some people maintain that the pleasant and the right may be regarded as causes external to ourselves, which constrain the will, and hence that acts which spring from them are compulsory. I do not suppose you would accept this view, but I would like to hear exactly how you would deal with it.

ARISTOTLE. Let me hear rather how *you* would deal with it, Theophrastus.

THEOPHRASTUS. I will do my best, but you have taken me rather by surprise. Well, I think I would say something like this—

(1) To begin with, your argument proves too much. For, if we grant your contention, all acts whatever will be compulsory. For the love of pleasure and the love of right are the motives of all our acts.

(2) In the next place, acts which are done under compulsion and against the grain are attended with pain, whereas acts done because they are pleasant or right are attended with pleasure. Therefore it is absurd to ascribe the cause to external things, instead of to yourself for being so easily caught by such things, and to claim the credit of your right acts for yourself, while you lay the blame of the wrong ones upon pleasure.

ARISTOTLE. You are going rather too fast there. For the theory that you undertook to disprove was that both right and wrong actions were due to causes external to

ourselves. Consistently with this theory right actions would be ascribed to the pure charms of virtue as wrong ones to the more meretricious allurements of pleasure. In neither case would the cause lie with ourselves.

THEOPHRASTUS. Yes, but I am sure the man whom I heard supporting the theory meant it only as an excuse for bad actions. He said something about a man being forced to make love to his neighbour's wife.

ARISTOTLE. His motive is his own concern: your business is with what he says. Depend upon it, edification is not worth seeking at the cost of misrepresentation.

THEOPHRASTUS. I will remember what you say.

NICOMACHUS. Father, you allowed me to say that there were *three* motives of choice—the right, the useful and the pleasant; and now you seem to approve of Theophrastus when he says that there are only two—the right and the pleasant.

ARISTOTLE. Well, my son, he has gone a little deeper than you. If a thing is useful, I suppose it must be useful for something. And what can that something be but the right or pleasant?

NICOMACHUS. But after all, father, were we right either of us? For, supposing I get into a rage and do or say something that I am sorry for a few minutes afterwards, I can hardly be said to have acted for the sake of pleasure, still less for the sake of right.

EUDEMUS. I don't know why Nicomachus should abandon his own position in this way, unless for the fun of attacking Theophrastus. For I suppose it might fairly be maintained that acts due to anger are done for the sake of pleasure. Anger, I have heard you say, is a form of pain and its gratification is attended with pleasure.

ARISTOTLE. In a certain large sense Theophrastus may be considered right in his division of motives, if by pleasure

be meant the gratification of any momentary impulse, so as to include the acts to which we are prompted by anger, and even those into which we are driven by fear. Fear aims at avoiding pain, and this may be brought under the head of pursuing pleasure. The term 'pleasure' in this sense will cover every motive other than the abstract preference for right. So that when Theophrastus refers acts to the two heads of pleasure and right, he is only saying this—that when we do anything, we do it either because it is right or from some other motive: which is undeniable. Still I think it was a true instinct, and not mere combativeness, that led Nicomachus to alter his position. There is certainly an awkwardness in extending the term 'pleasure' to the gratification of spirit or anger, when we are accustomed to confine it to the gratification of appetite. We ought really to have some other word to express the object at which passion, as distinguished from appetite, aims, instead of confusing the objects of the two principles under the one misleading term 'pleasure.'

NICOMACHUS. I was thinking of the three things of which you told us, father, when you were explaining the order of the moral virtues—appetite, spirit or passion, and wish. Those are really the springs or motives of all our actions—are they not?

ARISTOTLE. You may call them 'springs,' but not 'motives,' my son. If I used the latter term, I was not speaking with the exactness that I could have desired. But I think I was careful always to call them 'impulses.' Wish is an impulse which has good for its object, appetite is an impulse which has mere pleasure for its object, and passion is an impulse which has for its object what I can only call its own gratification. Now Theophrastus was quite right in talking of the objects of these impulses as the 'motives' of action rather than the impulses themselves. And your own

language also was quite correct, when you spoke of there being three motives that lead to choice—the right, the useful, and the pleasant. You felt a little aggrieved when Theophrastus expunged one of these motives, as not being ultimate. But we might go further and say, as we so often do, that there is only *one* motive for choice, namely, the good. We should not however have improved upon Theophrastus' statement by so doing. For the good may present itself either under the form of the pleasant or of the right. These two may coincide, but they are never identical.

NICOMACHUS. Then may wish aim at the pleasant as well as at the right?

ARISTOTLE. It may aim at the useful, or at the right, or at the pleasant when known to coincide with the right or, at all events, not to run counter to it. Different types of character will result from the predominance of these different ends, but they will all be animated by the rational desire for good.

NICOMACHUS. But I thought we were to drop out the useful, father?

ARISTOTLE. Theoretically yes, practically no. For though the useful can only mean what conduces to pleasure or right, people have a way of erecting the means into an end, and pursuing it for its own sake.

EUDEMUS. When you say that the good may present itself either under the form of the pleasant or of the right, do you mean to put these two motives on a level?

ARISTOTLE. In the case of the perfect man there would be no discrepancy between them. He might safely follow either, as either would lead him to the best course of action. But then we are none of us perfect, having all of us drunk more or less deeply of that draught of error, of which Cebes tells. For us, therefore, pleasure cannot be the guide of life. The things that are pleasant to us are not the things that

are naturally pleasant. By 'nature,' of course, you will understand me to mean the perfection of being, not the first rude state. Now as pleasure supervenes upon an act when it has become habitual, the pleasures of virtue are not felt until virtue has become a formed state. It follows therefore that if a man were to set out with the intention of following pleasure, he would remain always wallowing on the lower levels, instead of rising to the higher. There is, and must be, an element of self-sacrifice about virtue—the sacrifice of the lower to the higher nature—if at least you call this self-sacrifice, and not rather self-realisation. It depends upon what you call *yourself*. I should say that, if you are going to distinguish between one part and another, you had better give the name of 'self' to the highest and most god-like thing in you, so that self-realisation would be what Plato called philosophy, 'a growing into the likeness of God.' But we have wandered rather far from the point. I am not sorry, however, for having had this discussion as to the motives of action, as it will prepare you for many things that will come later. For its introduction we have to thank Theophrastus, who has been rather silent of late.

THEOPHRASTUS. I may have been silent, but I assure you I have not been inattentive.

ARISTOTLE. Let us come back to the point from which we digressed. I wish to reiterate, before we part, the definition which we arrived at of a compulsory act. *A compulsory act is one of which the efficient cause is outside of us, and to which the person compelled contributes nothing.*

This definition excludes acts due to the pleasant and the right from being regarded as compulsory. For the pleasant and the right are not causes outside of us ; or, if any one likes to think they are, still it cannot be said in these cases that the person compelled contributes nothing, since he contributes the consent of his will.

EUDEMUS. But if, as Theophrastus said, the pleasant and the right are the sole motives for action, then it follows that all our acts, of whatever kind, are voluntary.

ARISTOTLE. I do not shrink from that conclusion. A compulsory act, as I explained at the outset, is not really done but suffered.

In the next lecture we will examine the other kind of so-called involuntary act, namely, that which is due to ignorance.

LECTURE XV

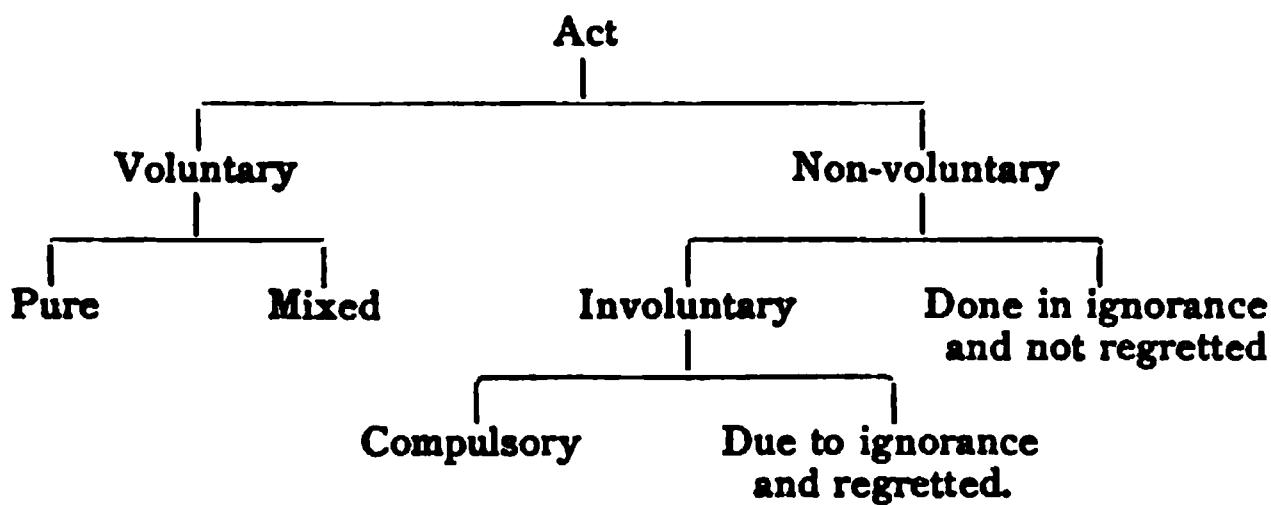
[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 1, §§ 13-27]

ACTS DUE TO IGNORANCE: THE VOLUNTARY ACT DEFINED: DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH THE DEFINITION

PEOPLE are accustomed to talk of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' acts, as though that were an exhaustive division. But in reality we can no more divide acts into voluntary and involuntary than we can divide colours into white and black. The only right division is into voluntary and non-voluntary, that is, we can say without fear of contradiction that an act is either voluntary or not. We cannot assert in the same way that it is either voluntary or involuntary. To say that would be to lay down that it must either go with the will or against it. But what if the will has never been consulted at all? This is the case with all acts done in ignorance of their true nature. All such acts then have to be set down under the head of non-voluntary. But if, when the true nature of the act becomes known, it is found to be not merely without, but against the will of the agent, we may, out of compliment as it were, call such an act involuntary, as we see that it would have run counter to the

agent's will, had the agent's will been consulted. We may judge of this by observing whether the act is followed by pain and regret or not. When Oedipus, under great provocation, killed an old man in a country-lane, he did not know that that old man was his father. He knew that he was guilty of homicide, but he never dreamt of parricide, and so we call the act, meaning the guilt of the act, non-voluntary. Again, when Oedipus accepted the hand of the widowed queen, that was forced upon him by a grateful people, he did not know that that widowed queen was his mother. The incest and the parricide were alike non-voluntary, and the tragic grief of Oedipus, when the terrible truth dawned upon him, justifies us in pronouncing them to have been both alike involuntary. But suppose that a son has killed his father unwittingly, and though he would never have done it, had he known, is still not sorry to find it done, what are we to say of his act then? He half makes it his own by dwelling upon it with satisfaction, but still we cannot call it voluntary, since we began by saying that he would not have done it, had he known; still less can we call it involuntary, since he is not sorry for it: we will therefore let it remain under the general head of the non-voluntary. Under this head falls the involuntary as a species; and this in its turn, as we saw in the last lecture, embraces two kinds—the compulsory act and the act due to ignorance, to the latter of which we now add the further qualification 'and regretted.' We saw too in the last lecture that what we called 'mixed acts' are really voluntary: but as there is an important practical difference between what a man does under pressure of circumstances and what he would do normally—all the difference, for instance, that there is between a cannibal and a Greek—we may mark this difference by distinguishing between the purely voluntary act and the mixed act, which is due to moral compulsion. It

will tend to make matters clearer if we schematize these various divisions.



The next point that we have to examine is when an act may justly be said to be due to ignorance, and on that ground involuntary.

It is plain that ignorance cannot be considered the cause of an act, if a man be himself the cause of his ignorance. Now a man may be himself the cause of his ignorance in a variety of ways. He may be so through drunkenness, anger, carelessness or vice; and in the last case his vice may take the form of the total depravity of the intemperate or incorrigible man, whose reason is perverted, or the partial depravity of the man who lacks self-control, whose reason is right, but whose will does not respond to it. The former state of mind we will call ignorance of the universal. It is the state of mind of the man who thinks that wrong is right for him, or, at all events, choiceworthy, if it tends to gratify his passions. The latter we will call ignorance in the purpose. It is the moral oblivion which seizes the man who sins against light. There is no ignorance of the universal here, but knowing full well that a thing is wrong, the man who lacks self-control goes and does it all the same. The former character may be said to be ignorant of the major premiss of the moral syllogism—‘An act of such and such a kind is wrong’; the latter is ignorant of the minor premiss.

— ‘This is an act of such and such a kind.’ Blinded for the moment by his passions he thinks only of ‘This is pleasant.’ And then, when he has had the pleasure, he repents. But the repentance is no proof that the act was involuntary. The act came from his will, only his will was weak.

In view of what has been said we must distinguish broadly between an act done in ignorance and an act due to ignorance. In the former case we ought perhaps not to talk of an act at all, since ‘action,’ strictly speaking, is always rational. Now a thing done in ignorance is either not in accordance with reason or is in accordance with a perverted reason: but an act due to ignorance may be a perfectly right and reasonable act under an hypothesis, which unfortunately happens to be false.

In the case of an act done in ignorance, ignorance is an accompanying circumstance, but the act is due to some other cause, such as those that we have enumerated. To make an act due to ignorance, ignorance must be the sole cause of it. And to make ignorance the sole cause of an act, the ignorance must be unavoidable, that is, it must be in no way due to the agent himself. Instead of allowing drunken ignorance to be pleaded in excuse for a wrong act, Pittacus, who is reckoned among the Seven Sages, instituted double penalties for offences committed when a man was drunk. He felt that ignorance of that sort was due to the agent himself. On the same principle men are punished for ignorance of obvious points of law, with which it is their duty to be acquainted: because such ignorance is traceable to their own carelessness. But, if special instances of carelessness do not render an act involuntary, neither do habits of carelessness as a whole, for a man contributes to their formation by his acts. When Cephalus shot into the thicket in the wilderness, he could not reasonably be expected to know that the thing which was stirring therein was a human

being, much less that it was his beloved Procris: and so we pardon and pity him. But if Cephalus had been in the habit of shooting on the high roads, he would have deserved to be lynched for his disregard of life. Neither can acts due to anger be termed involuntary, since they emanate direct from the spirit of the agent, and he contributes to them his own passionate impulse. Least of all can acts due to vice be termed involuntary. All vicious acts indeed may in a certain sense be ascribed to ignorance, since vice is not a man's true interest, though he too often mistakes, and thinks it is. But this sort of ignorance is an ignorance which condemns instead of exculpating. For the vicious man either knows his act to be wrong or he does not. If he does not, he must regard it as being right or indifferent, in either of which cases there is nothing to prevent a man from doing the act voluntarily; if he does, he cannot honestly plead ignorance even to himself.

What kind of ignorance is it then that makes an act involuntary? We have already indicated that it must be unavoidable ignorance, and we may add to this that it must be ignorance of some particular point of fact, which alters the real character of the act from that under which it presents itself to the agent. In other words, you have to prove that you never meant to commit the kind of act which, as a matter of fact, you have committed.

Let us call in again the eye of the body to assist the vision of the eye of the soul.

A wrong act may be either

done in ignorance.	Cause	drunkenness
	anger	carelessness
Cause	vice	ignorance in the purpose = lack of self-control
		ignorance of the universal = total depravity

or due to ignorance. Cause—ignorance of particulars.

Since the only kind of ignorance which can rightly be held to render an act involuntary is unavoidable ignorance of particulars, it may be as well that we should try to analyse an act into the combination of details which make it up.

To begin with, there must obviously be an agent, or person who does the deed, and there must also be an object, or deed which is done. Next, there is the thing with regard to which, or it may be the person on whom, the act is done. There is also the thing with which, as for instance an instrument; for the agent cannot effect an act without instruments of some sort, if it be only the limbs of his own body. Then there is the motive, or final cause of the act, which is the most important of all the details, for example, to save. And lastly, there is the manner in which it is done, as for instance, gently or violently. Without pretending then to exhaust the details of an act, which are practically infinite, we may perhaps sum them up loosely under these main heads—the agent, the object, the thing concerned or the person on whom it is done, the means, the motive and the manner.

Of course no one could be ignorant of all these details, unless he were stark mad. It is doubtful whether, even under these circumstances, he could be ignorant of the agent, to wit himself.

But a man might be ignorant of what he is doing, that is of the act proper. For instance, people sometimes plead that the words slipped from them when they were speaking, or that they did not know that the thing they were telling was a secret. The latter was the case with Aeschylus, when he was accused of revealing the mysteries in one of his plays. His defence was that he did not know that he had been revealing the mysteries, and this was accepted by the Court of Areopagus. We had an instance of the same sort of thing in the lamentable accident which occurred the

other day. A man was fiddling with the spring of a loaded catapult, meaning only to show how it was worked, when, unfortunately, he carried off the head of one of the bystanders.

Ignorance of the person on whom the act is done we may illustrate from the *Cresphontes* of Euripides, in which Merope has her axe lifted to slay her son, whom she deems an enemy, but recognises him just in time to avoid the catastrophe.

As an instance of ignorance of the means or instrument, we may take the trainer's mistake in choosing a pointed spear instead of a rounded one, or the use of flint instead of pumice.

Ignorance of the motive is no more possible in normal cases than ignorance of the agent. But a mistake may occur in connexion with it, in that the result may prove different from what you intended. When the daughters of Pelias cut up their aged sire and boiled him in a pot, they were well aware that their motive was a good one. It was an act of filial piety. Had not Medea, who knew so much, told them that this would rejuvenate him? There was a mistake however somewhere, for the result did not answer to their expectations. In later times a woman who had administered to a man a dose of hemlock was acquitted by the Areopagus. She convinced her judges that what she meant to give him was a drink of wine with a love-potion in it.

Ignorance of the manner was exhibited by the training-master that time he made Coriscus' nose bleed, when he was sparring with him.

Such then being the combination of details that make up an act, unavoidable ignorance with regard to any of them may be held to render an act involuntary, and especially so in the case of the most important. The most important of

all, as we have said, is the motive. That is the very essence of the act. Next to it in importance perhaps comes the person on whom the act is performed. This makes such a difference to its character. You slap a comrade, as you think, on the back, and when he looks round, you see that it is one of the Nine Archons ! But we must not forget that before we can pronounce a man an involuntary agent on the ground of such ignorance as we have described, there must be added the further qualification that he is sorry for what he has done, when he finds it out. Otherwise we must set down his action simply as non-voluntary.

Now, at last, we are in a position to define the voluntary act. We have seen that there are two things—compulsion and ignorance—either of which may render an act involuntary. It follows that a perfectly voluntary act will combine the two contrary attributes of freedom and knowledge. We will therefore define the voluntary act to be *one of which the efficient cause is in a man himself, when he knows the particular circumstances under which the act takes place.*

This, I say, is the perfectly voluntary act. Still we need not scruple to call an act voluntary which is done without constraint, even if knowledge should be defective or absent, as in the case of children and the lower animals. We would say that a dog acts voluntarily when he runs off after a bone. He is acting in accordance with his own nature. If he comes back when his master calls him, he is still acting in accordance with his own nature, only under pressure of circumstances. But if his master puts a leash round his neck and drags him away perforce, then he is not acting in accordance with his own nature, or indeed acting at all. So when a stone moves down or fire moves up, it is following the law of its nature ; any other motion must be imposed upon it from without. In the case of an inanimate body we do not talk of 'voluntary' action, but rather of

'spontaneous' or 'automatic' movement: still this movement is essentially analogous to voluntary action in the case of a living being. For the essence of voluntary action is that a creature follows the law of its own nature, whatever that nature may be. The best test of what that nature really is in the case of a human being is what we have called 'mixed acts.' The way in which one's nature responds to exceptional circumstances may be a revelation even to the possessor of it. There are many things besides 'office' which will show the man.

EUDEMUS. Your account of voluntary action seems quite clear. Still it is so common to hear people talk of the victims of passion as acting involuntarily, that I wish you would supply us with some arguments directly aimed at this position.

ARISTOTLE. Are you using 'passion' now in the narrower sense in which we identify it with spirit, or in the wider sense in which it is equivalent to feeling generally?

EUDEMUS. In a wide sense, but not in the widest. I want you to show that acts which spring from the irrational impulses, which you said we were to call 'appetite' and 'spirit' are not involuntary.

ARISTOTLE. (1) Well, next time you hear people maintain this, ask them whether they allow that children or the lower animals ever act voluntarily. They cannot on their principles, since the irrational impulses are the sole springs of action in them.

(2) Next, you may ask them whether all the acts that spring from these impulses are involuntary, or the right ones voluntary and the wrong ones involuntary. If they choose the latter alternative, you may go on to ask them how these acts can differ as voluntary and involuntary, when they proceed from one and the same cause. If, on the other hand, they choose the former, they will be

involved in a difficult position in having to say that you ought to do some things which are involuntary. For certainly there are some occasions on which one ought to feel angry, and also certain things which one ought to covet, for instance, health and learning. But to say that one ought is to say that one can, and to say that one can is to say that the thing lies in the power of one's own will and is voluntary. Suppose you had a friend who was bound in prison. How impertinent he would think you, if you were to visit him in his cell, and tell him that he really *ought* to take exercise, else his health would suffer! You see that we have got our friends here on the horns of a dilemma. Now, Theophrastus, you are dialectician enough to draw out the argument in its proper logical form.

THEOPHRASTUS. Well, I suppose it might be formulated thus—

If all the acts which spring from these impulses are maintained to be involuntary, the position is untrue; and if only some, the position is inconsistent.

But either all are maintained to be involuntary or only some.

∴ The position is either untrue or inconsistent.

ARISTOTLE. Right. What you have given is a complex constructive dilemma; and each of the propositions in the major premiss was supported by a proof, so that the whole constitutes a train of reasoning consisting of three syllogisms.

NICOMACHUS. I can follow the dilemma, father. But what are these other syllogisms of which you speak?

ARISTOTLE. We can put them thus, my son—

(1) Nothing that is right can be involuntary.

Some of the acts that are prompted by these impulses are right.

∴ Some of the acts that are prompted by these impulses are not involuntary.

This syllogism amounts to saying that 'if all the acts which spring from these impulses are involuntary, the position is untrue.'

(2) Acts which proceed from precisely the same cause cannot be the one voluntary and the other involuntary.

Right and wrong acts in the case of these impulses proceed from precisely the same cause.

.∴ Right and wrong acts in the case of these impulses cannot be the one voluntary and the other involuntary.

This is equivalent to establishing the other proposition in the major premiss.

(3) Now we will go on to a third argument.

Involuntary acts are painful.

Acts prompted by appetite are pleasurable.

.∴ Acts prompted by appetite are not involuntary.

NICOMACHUS. This leaves out all reference to anger, father.

ARISTOTLE. It does, my son. I have already indicated my dislike to using the term 'pleasure' to express the gratification of that impulse. But only a slight change of expression is needed to make the same argument apply to anger, or, let us say, to spirit generally.

Involuntary acts are not done for the sake of gratification.

Acts prompted by spirit are done for the sake of gratification.

.∴ Acts prompted by spirit are not involuntary.

(4) In the fourth place, Eudemus, you can ask your opponents how there can be this difference in involuntariness between faults of passion and calculated villainy, when both alike ought to be shunned. If they *ought* to be shunned, it proves them both to be voluntary, just as much as if they *ought* to be sought.

EUDEMUS. But surely there is a great difference between these two kinds of faults?

ARISTOTLE. I am not denying that, but only maintaining that the difference does not lie in the one being voluntary and the other involuntary. It lies in the one being pre-meditated and the other not. But of that anon.

(5) The argument which I have been reserving for the last place would alone be sufficient to prove our point. It is this. The irrational impulses are quite as much a part of man's nature as the reason is. Therefore the acts which proceed from them are man's acts. It is absurd to put down appetite and passion as involuntary when these are the mainsprings of human action.

EUDEMUS. I am afraid I shall require explanation on some points before I can employ that last argument effectively.

ARISTOTLE. State your difficulties, and I will try to remove them.

EUDEMUS. Well, to begin with, I do not know how to reconcile it with what you told us before. You said that the divine element in man, by which I understood you to mean the reason or intellect, was the true self. Now you say that the passions are quite as much a part of man as the reason.

ARISTOTLE. There is no real discrepancy there, I think. The true self is one thing, the man is another thing. The inmost core of our being does, I believe, partake of the divine nature; it is the light that shines in us all; it is imperishable and immortal. You may call it reason or mind or what you will, provided you understand by it the thing that rules and guides. I do not mean that as a matter of fact it always does rule and guide—far from it—but that it is entitled to do so in virtue of its intrinsic superiority: it is the natural ruler and guide. In the perfect man you would see that it is also the actual ruler and guide. But, notice this, that reason is nothing personal or individual.

In so far as we are rational we all act alike ; I may go further and say, we are all one. The one light shines alike in all, but it is splintered into rays and diversely coloured by the passions. It is these which make the personality, which some people may prefer to call themselves. The passions however are connected with the body. It is the union of a mortal body with an immortal soul that makes what we call man, a being half deity and half dust.

EUDEMUS. I see the difference now between 'man' and 'the true self.' My next difficulty was to know what you meant by saying that appetite and passion are the main-springs of human action. What has become of the third form of impulse of which you told us, namely, wish ? If man's actions proceed only from appetite and passion or spirit, wherein is he distinguished from the brutes ?

ARISTOTLE. By the fact that his appetite and spirit may be guided by reason, whereas they live solely by impulse. Wish, or the desire for the good, is feeling enlightened by reason ; it is a deferred form of appetite or passion. Since reason, as I have told you more than once, is not an active principle at all, we are thrown back for the origination of action upon the animal instincts. These may be filtered through all kinds of channels and refined beyond recognition : but for all that man cannot escape from the fact that he is an animal, and his moral nature must still be grounded on his physical.

EUDEMUS. Does not this leave a rather low origin for virtue ?

ARISTOTLE. Many very noble things have rather low origins. Remember the story of Amasis and his footpan. But the lowness of the origin may be only in our imaginations. The tree that soars to heaven has its roots fixed in the soil of earth, and we call these roots 'dirty,' and would wash our hands after grubbing in them before we dined.

But to the eye of reason there is no dirt in matter except what mind puts into it.

However, the animal instincts are not all base even in our view of them. How often we are compelled to admire the spirit of the lower animals and their devotion to their young! What limit then shall be put to the capacities of these instincts when illuminated by the light from above?

But, lastly, when you come to think of it, what other origin is possible for virtue except that which I have indicated? Virtue—we are both of us speaking now of moral virtue—has been found to consist in the control of the passions by the reason. The lower animals are below morality, because they are governed solely by passion; the gods are above morality, because they are pure reason. Morality is only possible to a being intermediate between the brute and the god. It is rendered possible only in and through the animal instincts.

EUDEMUS. I am afraid you will be weary of my difficulties and objections, if I do not desist now.

ARISTOTLE. I am never weary of difficulties and objections. How can one expect to get at the truth of a question without examining it carefully on every side?

EUDEMUS. Well then I will confess that there still seems to me to be room for calling acts prompted by appetite and anger involuntary. For these acts are forced upon the true self by a cause external to itself, and so they satisfy your own definition of the compulsory. The true self contributes nothing to them, and they are not really done but suffered. Indeed the word passion—if it be not impious to turn against yourself a weapon which you have taught me to wield—would seem to indicate this. It brands these so-called ‘acts’ as being really so many outrages put upon the majesty of the natural ruler.

ARISTOTLE. Well done, Eudemus ! If you expound my doctrine some day as ably as you oppose it now, I shall have reason to be content. Your questions tempt me off the main track of the argument, but, as we have digressed so much already, we may as well digress a little more, and not leave this subject until we have threshed it thoroughly out.

You remember my telling you that the essence of voluntary action lay in a thing following the law of its own nature, whatever that nature may be. Well, the nature of a stone, or of any inanimate object, is a comparatively simple matter. A stone has power to move down, so as to rejoin the mass of its kindred nature, but it has no power to move up. Fire, on the same principle, has power to move up, but it has no power to move down. A stone we believe not to be conscious of the impulse within it : but an animal is conscious of it. The nature of the lower animals, however, is still comparatively simple, for their impulses are wholly irrational. But man is torn by conflicting impulses—to follow the good which appeals to him at the moment or to follow the good which reason declares to him to be higher. Hence his nature is more or less dual. Looking at the matter from this point of view, there are four characters, or rather types of character, to be distinguished—

Temperate,
Self-controlled,
Uncontrolled,
Intemperate.

At the bottom of the scale there is the totally depraved man, whom we call 'intemperate,' because he is the antipodes of the temperate. There is no war in his nature, because reason has been perverted by passion : he uses his reason, not to enable him to discern the higher end, but

only to devise means for the attainment of the lower. He is so bad that he does not know that he is bad, and this is the worst kind of badness, just as the worst kind of ignorance is the ignorance that fancies itself knowledge.

Above him in the moral scale there is the man who lacks self-control. In him the light of reason shines clear enough, but it is obscured every now and then by the fumes of passion, so that he does the thing which he himself knows to be wrong. There is war in his nature, and the issue of the struggle is the victory of passion over reason. He goes on sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning. If his repentance should at any time prove vigorous enough, it may raise him out of this state; if he ceases to repent, he will fall into the state of the man below him.

Above this character stands the man of self-control, of whom we have denied that he is virtuous, in the perfect sense which constitutes happiness, while we admit that he is worthy of all praise. There is still war in his nature, but the issue of the struggle is different. It is the victory of reason over passion. If he perseveres in subduing his passions, they will become at length so trained into obedience to the reason, that they will make instinctively for the goal which it approves. The character in whom this final victory has been achieved is called the temperate man, whom we have set at the summit of all. There is no longer war in his nature, for the passions have been brought into harmony with the reason.

Thus you see that the two extreme characters, both of which are ideal rather than real, have a nature as simple as that of the lower animals. It is the intermediate characters, to which the bulk of mankind belongs, which are dual. In them you may say that one part of the soul is forced by the other. In the man of self-control the passions are forced by the reason; in the man who lacks self-control

the reason is forced by the passions. The actions of both may be said to be involuntary, in respect of a part of their nature. But in respect of the whole soul, which is what we mean by the man, this is not so. The man follows his nature, whether for good or evil. His bursts of passion are as much his own acts and voluntary as his most rational conduct.

In the same way a state may be torn by factions internally, but, whichever party prevails, its acts are still the acts of the state.

LECTURE XVI

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 2]

THE PURPOSED ACT DEFINED

HAVING sufficiently examined the voluntary and the involuntary, we must next endeavour to ascertain wherein exactly an act done on purpose differs from a merely voluntary act.

Whatever else purpose may be, we know this much about it, that it is the thing most intimately connected with virtue. We are so sure of this, that we assumed it in our definition. We may say also that it is a better test of moral character than actions themselves are. I mean that it would be a better test of character, if we could get at it. But, as a matter of fact, the purpose is hidden away from us, and we are obliged to judge a man by his acts. Still, if by some means the inner could suddenly be turned into the outer, we should know a great deal more than we do of the real character of people, and many surprises might be in store for us.

As an act done on purpose is a species of voluntary act, so purpose itself may be declared to be a species of voluntary agency. Children and the lower animals are as capable of voluntary agency as men, but we do not allow that they partake of purpose. Again, acts done on

the spur of the moment are voluntary enough, but we do not say that they are done on purpose. But it is not enough to say that an act done on purpose is a species of voluntary act, or that purpose itself is a species of voluntary agency, we must say definitely *what* species.

In setting out to discover purpose, it is evident that it is in the soul that we must look for it. Now we divide the soul roughly into two parts—the irrational and the rational. You may call the one the emotions and the other the intellect, the one the passions, and the other the reason, the one the heart and the other the head: it does not matter, so long as you recognise what I mean.

Purpose seems to come from the heart. Let us search for it therefore first on that side of man's nature. The feelings or passions individually have a great variety of names, but we trace them all to the three impulses, with which you are by this time familiar, as appetite, spirit or passion, and wish. If purpose is something merely emotional, it must come under one or other of these three heads.

But purpose is not appetite for the following reasons—

(1) Appetite is common to the lower animals; purpose is not.

(2) The man who lacks self-control acts from appetite or desire and not from purpose, whereas the self-controlled man acts from purpose, and not from desire.

(3) Appetite is opposed to purpose, but one appetite is not opposed to another.

(4) The object of appetite is always the pleasant; the object of purpose is not.

(5) Appetite is always attended with pain; purpose is not.

These five arguments are, I think, sufficient to show that purpose is not identical with appetite or desire.

THEOPHRASTUS. I can follow them all except the third,

in which, if I may make so bold as to say it, you seem to me either to be assuming the point at issue or to be saying what is not true. If, when you say that appetite is opposed to purpose, you mean only that it is not the same with it, that is the point which your arguments were directed to prove: but if, on the other hand, you mean that appetite runs counter to purpose, then it seems to me untrue to say that one appetite cannot run counter to another. May not, for instance, the desire for money run counter to the desire for pleasure, without any question of right or wrong intervening? Or may not a man be distracted between desires for different pleasures, so as to hesitate, for instance, whether he shall go to the theatre or rather stay at home to carry on an intrigue with a lady?

ARISTOTLE. Your objection is well put. But I think it attaches to the form rather than to the substance of the argument. Perhaps I might have expressed my meaning better, if I had said 'Appetite contradicts purpose, but one appetite does not contradict another.' Now it is impossible for two people to contradict one another, unless they are talking of the same thing. But appetite being blind and irrational, knows nothing of any object but its own. Hence two appetites can never contradict one another. Hunger says 'Eat.' It may be so strong as to make us forget to drink for a while, but it never says 'Don't drink.' On the other hand, appetite is constantly contradicting purpose, and saying 'Do this, that and the other,' when purpose has said 'Thou shalt not do it.' In so far as the love of money is a mere blind appetite for accumulation, it does not directly contradict any other desire, but only indirectly, as being stronger than the other at a given moment: but in so far as it is a preference for the remoter over the immediate good, it becomes a form of purpose.

The next form of impulse is spirit or passion. But much

the same reasons apply to this as to the other irrational form of impulse. Purpose is not spirit or passion. For—

(1) Spirit is common to the lower animals ; purpose is not.

(2) There is such a thing as incontinence of spirit as well as of appetite, and the man who lacks self-restraint acts from passion, and not from purpose, whereas the self-restrained man acts from purpose, and not from passion.

(3) Passion contradicts purpose, but one passion does not contradict another.

(4) The object of passion is its own special gratification ; the object of purpose is the good of the whole man. The last argument which we used in the case of appetite does not apply to this form of impulse. For though hatred is always attended with pain, love is attended with pleasure, and is only indirectly a source of pain.

THEOPHRASTUS. I seemed to myself to be quite convinced by your answer to my last objection. But the difficulty has broken out again with redoubled force, when you come to apply to the passions the same argument as you did to the appetites, about their not contradicting one another. Surely love says 'help' and hate 'refrain from helping,' revenge says 'slay' and pity 'spare'?

ARISTOTLE. I confess that I was in some doubt myself as to whether to apply it so or not. The passions do indeed seem to contradict one another. Medea's hatred for her husband and thirst for vengeance prompt her to slay her children ; a mother's love and compassion whisper her to spare them and herself ; and so she remains irresolute for a time, with her soul swept by alternate gusts of passion, until the stronger prevails. But we must distinguish between the passions themselves and the reasoning that lights them to their gratification. It was an act of reflection that convinced Medea that the husband could best be wounded

through the children. But the passions in themselves are mere gropings in the dark. After all, love only says 'Gratify me' and hate 'Gratify me,' so that the contradiction between them is indirect. They are like children crying 'Me, me' in answer to 'Who'll have?' This is different from the direct contradiction between the child who says 'I will have' and the mother who says 'You shall not.'

Purpose presents a much greater appearance of resemblance to the third species of impulse, which we have called 'wish.' For this, like it, is rational. Nevertheless purpose is not identical with wish. Three arguments will suffice to prove this point—

(1) We may wish for the impossible, but we do not purpose it.

You may wish to be able to fly, or to be king of all the world, or to live for ever. But if you were to say that you purposed any of these things, your friends would begin to think about a strait-waistcoat.

(2) We may wish for what depends on others, but we do not purpose it.

Among things which are not impossible in their own nature there are many which we have no power to effect, for instance, that a favourite actor or athlete should win. We may wish vehemently for these things, but we only purpose what is in our own power. Mark that point particularly, for we shall want to use it afterwards.

(3) We wish for the end, but we purpose the means. For instance, we wish to be well, but we purpose to take a pill. Again, we wish to be happy, and there is no harm in saying so: but to say 'We purpose to be so' is unsuitable. For it is the means only that are in our own power, and the desired end may, after all, not crown our efforts. After we have taken all the means that are open to us to ensure health and happiness, we may still fail to attain them.

We do not find purpose then on the emotional side of man's nature. It is not identical with any of the three forms of impulse. But perhaps it comes from the head, not from the heart. Let us search for it therefore on the intellectual side.

Here we have first to distinguish broadly between knowledge and opinion. Knowledge deals only with things which cannot be otherwise than as they are. Opinion may be extended to these, but its proper sphere is things which, as a matter of fact, are one way, but which might conceivably be another. Of the latter kind is the whole range of things 'doable,' to which purpose is manifestly confined. Nay, we have gone further, and limited it already to things in our own power to do. We may therefore put knowledge out of the question altogether, and confine ourselves to considering whether purpose is identical with opinion.

Two arguments may be urged which seem fatal to this view—

(1) We may hold opinions on all subjects, but we only purpose what is in our own power.

You may hold your own opinion, for what it is worth, on the infinite divisibility of matter or on the commensurability or incommensurability of the diagonal and the side of a square: but purpose, it is plain, cannot affect such things. Again, you may have your opinion as to the desirability of ends, but you only purpose the means.

(2) Opinion is divided into true and false, purpose into good and bad.

THEOPHRASTUS. I do not think any one is likely to maintain the identity of purpose with opinion in general. But might it not with more plausibility be alleged that purpose is the same thing with opinion on matters of action? One never does anything without having an opinion that there is some good to be got by it. If I come to your

lectures, it is because I have an opinion that some benefit will accrue to me thereby. May it not therefore be maintained that it is this opinion which makes me come?

ARISTOTLE. Well, we will discuss the question on the narrower ground of the possible identity of purpose with opinion as to conduct. But I think you will find that the very same objections tell against this view, and others as well.

(1) It is our purposing to do good or evil that decides our characters, not our opinions.

People may hold what appear to be very queer opinions, and yet be very good men, if, when it comes to a question of conduct, they deliberately choose the right. You can never judge a man from his views.

(2) Purpose is practical, opinion, even on matters of action, is still purely speculative.

Common language recognises this distinction. We talk of 'purposing' to take or avoid, but we do not talk of 'having an opinion' to do so. Rather we talk of having an opinion as to what a thing is, or for whose interest it is, or how it is.

(3) The perfection of purpose is to be right, that of opinion to be true.

When I speak thus of purpose being right, you must understand me to refer to its end being right. To purpose rightly the means to a bad end would not be the perfection of purpose. By 'right' I mean 'morally right.'

(4) We purpose the things which we are most sure are good; we often hold opinions where we are not quite sure.

How often do you hear a man say, 'I don't know such and such a thing, but I will give you my opinion for what it is worth.' Opinion is thus a substitute for certainty, whereas purpose is attended by the greatest certainty attainable.

(5) Lastly, a man may have sound opinions, while his purposes are warped by vice.

These arguments, Theophrastus, are enough, I think, to disprove the identity of purpose with opinion as to conduct. The last indeed would be sufficient by itself. But suppose we admitted, for the sake of argument, that purpose always went hand in hand with opinion as to matters of action, still it would not follow that the two are identical. Two things may always go together as a matter of fact and yet be mentally distinguishable. Who confounds colour and extension? And yet you never find the one without the other. Even if all the students who were of opinion that there was some good to be gained by coming to my lectures, were as diligent in their attendance as you, still the opinion as to the good would be one thing and the purpose to come would be another.

Let us now glance back upon what we have been doing. We looked for purpose on the side of the heart, and failed to find it among the emotions, even when enlightened by reason. We then turned to the side of the head, and looked for purpose there: but there also we failed to find it. Where are we to look further?

NICOMACHUS. But, father, there is nowhere else to look. For you said that man might be divided into heart and head.

ARISTOTLE. And yet there is undoubtedly such a thing as purpose in the soul.

NICOMACHUS. Then I suppose it must be the joint result of both.

ARISTOTLE. That is exactly the conclusion to which I wished to lead you, my son. Purpose comes neither exclusively from the head nor yet exclusively from the heart. That is why we failed to find it under either taken singly. There is in it an intellectual element, and there is in it also an emotional element. The intellectual element which enters into the composition of purpose is deliberation.

Before we can say that an act is done on purpose we have to know, that it is not merely voluntary, but also pre-meditated. Now we see what differentiates the result of purpose from a voluntary act generally. It is the element of deliberation which purpose involves. We might call the result of purpose an act of *preference*, and so indicate in its very name its intellectual character. For 'preference' means choosing one thing before others. But you cannot do this without comparing the things ; and comparison is of the very essence of thought. The act done on purpose therefore may be defined as '*a voluntary act which has been previously deliberated upon.*'

Having discovered now that purpose is of a composite nature, it remains that we should examine each element in it separately, in order that we may exhaust its meaning.

This however must form the subject of our next lecture.

LECTURE XVII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 3, 4]

THE INTELLECTUAL ELEMENT IN PURPOSE: THE EMOTIONAL ELEMENT IN PURPOSE: PURPOSE DEFINED

To-day we have to determine the sphere of deliberation. Is it conterminous with the universe of things? Or are there some things to which deliberation is inapplicable? By 'the sphere of deliberation' you will, of course, understand me to mean the proper sphere of deliberation. A fool or madman might fancy anything to come within the scope of his counsels, but we need concern ourselves only with the views of sane and sensible men. Let us approach the subject cautiously, and arrive at the sphere of deliberation as the result of a series of exclusions.

Taking things in general we may divide them, to begin with, into those which are eternal and immutable, and those which admit of movement or change of some sort. Of the former nature is the universe itself, by which I mean the eternal substance of the universe. All states of the universe indeed are liable to change, but the universe itself knows nothing of generation or decay, but is everlastingly and imperishably the same. Equally exempt from change, though in a somewhat different way, are the truths of mathematics. Who deliberates, for instance, as to

whether the three angles of a triangle shall be equal to two right angles? Truths of this sort are not things that have been or shall be, but things that are. You may know them or not; you may discover the truth or it may escape you; but that is a different thing from deliberating about it. It is plain then that we may exclude the unchangeable from the sphere of deliberation, and confine our attention to things that admit of movement or change of some sort.

But here again a distinction must be observed. Things may change, and yet their change may be from some cause or other, whether by necessity or by nature, regular and periodic. In this case deliberation is as much out of the question as with regard to things that admit of no change at all. No one deliberates about the courses of the planets, or about the returning seasons, or the alternations of night and day. We are thus limited to things which do not always take place in the same way.

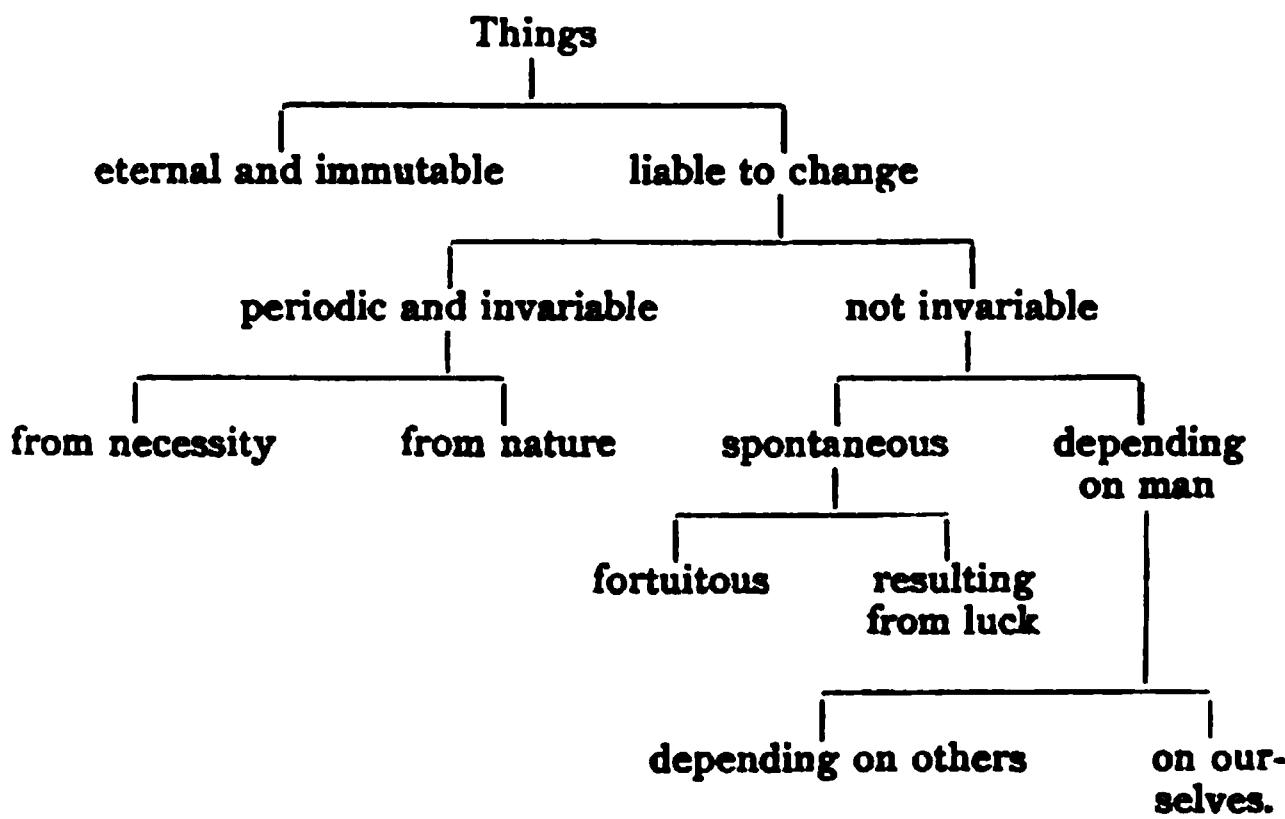
These may be distinguished into those which depend on man and those which do not. The latter, for the sake of a general name, we will lump together under the title of 'the spontaneous.' These, whether they depend on chance or luck, are equally outside the sphere of deliberation.

EUDEMUS. May I ask what is the distinction that you draw between 'chance' and 'luck'?

ARISTOTLE. By 'luck' I mean something which, though not depending on man, has still some reference to him and his fortunes. The close connexion that there is between 'good luck' and 'happiness' is sufficient to show that the former has some bearing upon human action. Understand me then to mean by 'luck' unexpected success not following from a man's own conduct as effect from cause. With regard to such a thing it is plain that deliberation would be out of place. In laying his plans for life no one would seriously take into account the chance of turning up

a treasure. By 'chance' in the present context I mean the whole range of the fortuitous exclusive of what we have embraced under the term luck. You may take the weather as an instance. It defies deliberation because it is absolutely variable.

Things which depend on man may be divided into things which depend on ourselves and things which depend on others. About the latter no man deliberates; for instance, no Lacedaemonian deliberates as to how the Scythians or Indians may best be governed. In so far indeed as we can influence the actions of others they do form a proper subject for deliberation, but to that extent they may be said in a way to depend upon ourselves. Thus the sphere of deliberation is narrowed down to things in our own power to do. The following scheme will enable you to take in at a glance the process which we have been pursuing—



If you consider the causes that there are, you will see that we have excluded the effects of all of them except human agency from the domain of deliberation. For,

apart from man, there are no causes but necessity, nature, spontaneity, and luck, and these we have severally eliminated.

EUDEMUS. Do you put spontaneity and luck on the same level as necessity and nature?

ARISTOTLE. No, they are rather negative, while the others are positive. If anything takes place within the sphere of nature apart from the operation of nature, we call it spontaneous, and if anything takes place within the sphere of human agency apart from that agency, we ascribe it to luck. But we need not refine about these matters now.

Even within the circumscribed sphere which has been left to deliberation there are further exclusions which have to be made.

(1) There are certain things in our own power about which we do not deliberate, simply because they do not need it, being already fixed and settled. This is so in the case of such branches of knowledge as are already exact and complete. Thus an educated person requires no deliberation about writing, being in no doubt how to form the letters or spell the syllables. Hence we deliberate about the arts in inverse proportion to the precision to which they have attained. Medicine, navigation, and money-getting offer plentiful scope for deliberation; gymnastic-training less so, owing to the way in which it has been reduced to system.

To render things in our own power therefore proper matter for deliberation, they must not be always done in the same way, but must be such as to vary within limits, being uncertain in their issue, and having in them an element of indefiniteness. You must understand this indefiniteness to proceed from our lack of knowledge rather than from the arbitrary nature of the things themselves:

for in so far as there was an absolute uncertainty attaching to them they would not be fit subjects for deliberation at all. The sphere of deliberation may be said to lie as it were between two poles. If things are absolutely fixed, deliberation is superfluous ; if they are absolutely variable, deliberation is useless.

It is this element of indefiniteness, which we have recognised as essential to the sphere of deliberation, that makes us so often distrust our own judgements and take counsel with others wherever important issues are involved.

(2) Further, it must be observed that it is means only that are the objects of deliberation and not ends. The doctor, as such, does not deliberate as to whether he shall cure his patient, nor the orator as to whether he shall persuade, nor the statesman as to whether he shall produce good laws or effect whatever else we may set down as being the end of statecraft ; but the end being already assumed as good, deliberation points out the best means of achieving it. The way in which it does this may be compared to the process by which the proof of some proposition is arrived at in geometry. 'I am sure,' says a geometer to himself, 'that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal to one another ; but how am I to prove it? You can prove things equal to one another by showing that they are equal to the same thing, but that does not seem to help me much in this case. Stop ! I think I see a better way. If I can show that these angles are the remainders, when equals are taken from equals, that will show that they are themselves equal. Therefore I must have angles which contain these angles and something more. And if these larger angles are to be proved equal, they must belong to triangles which have two sides and the contained angle equal ; the same condition also applies to the smaller angles which I wish to take

from them. But all I have to go on is that the two sides of the isosceles triangle itself are equal; and there is the angle at the vertex which might be used as a contained angle common to the two large triangles. That gives me one side and an angle. The other side containing the angle can be got by extending the sides of the isosceles triangle.'

This, or something like this, is the process which goes on in the geometer's mind in the attempt to discover a proof. But now he has brought the matter down to something requiring to be done, and accordingly he begins his construction from this point. 'Let the sides AB, AC,' he says, 'be produced to D and E.'

In the same way, when a man is deliberating as to the attainment of some end, his first step is to consider how or by what means it can be accomplished. If there are several means, he has to decide between them, as to which is the easiest and best. If there is only one means, the matter is so far simplified, but he may have to raise the question how to employ that means, and also by what means it in its turn is to be brought about. And so he goes on until he has brought the matter down to the first cause, which is the last to be discovered. This must be something in his own power to do: for, if it were not, further deliberation would be required as to how to get it done. But when once the matter has been brought home to one's own will the time for deliberation is over, and the hour for action has struck.

EUDEMUS. Are we to understand that deliberation and mathematical investigation are the same?

ARISTOTLE. They are not the same, but they are cognate species of the same genus, which genus we may call investigation. Deliberation is always investigation, but investigation is not always deliberation. It would not be

proper, for instance, to speak of a mathematical investigation, such as that which we have just been using for an example, as deliberation. Deliberation has action in view, not knowledge. You may define it as that species of investigation which relates to conduct.

NICOMACHUS. Will you not give us an example of deliberation, father, just as you did of mathematical investigation?

ARISTOTLE. It is a thing of which every one's own experience can supply him with examples. Let us imagine a young man ambitious of military glory. The end is settled for him without question of its goodness, the problem being only how to attain it. 'If I am to have military glory,' he says to himself, 'I must learn the profession of arms. But war can only be learnt in war. Therefore I must serve under the king in Asia. If so, I must get a commission. Antipater might do that for me, but he is in Thessaly at present. Shall I write to him? The letter might fail to reach him or he might neglect it. I had much better go in person, and remind him of his friendship for my father. If I go by land he may have left before I get there. There is a vessel leaving the Piraeus to-day for Eion, but it starts in three hours. I must pack up my things at once.' And so where the train of thought ended the train of action begins. Everything now comes in reverse order. The young man packs up his things, goes down to the Piraeus, sails to Thessaly, sees Antipater, gets his commission, serves under the king, and, let us hope, obtains the military glory for which he was panting. But, as I have often reminded you, means are much more in our own power than ends.

If an impossibility should occur in the train of thought, it is, of course, never succeeded by the train of action. If the young man, for instance, found it quite impossible to

muster enough money to pay for his passage, his fame as a general would be nipped in the bud.

The possible may be defined, for present purposes, as 'what can be effected by ourselves.' But this must be taken in a large sense so as to include what can be effected for us by our friends, since the efficient cause in such cases lies with us.

Sometimes the question under deliberation is—What are the instruments? and sometimes—How are we to use them? A battering-ram would be of little good to a man who did not know how to work it. To put the same thing more generally, we sometimes deliberate as to what the means are, sometimes how to use them or whose agency to employ. But, to come back now to the point on which we were insisting, namely, that deliberation is concerned with means, not with ends, the following argument will serve to clinch the matter—

Deliberation is concerned with actions.

Actions are always means.

∴ Deliberation is concerned with means.

THEOPHRASTUS. I thought we were to understand that good action is the end of life, or at all events, the main constituent of it. How then can you say that actions are always means?

ARISTOTLE. Because by good action I do not mean an isolated act, but a course of right action indicative of a permanent mental state from which it proceeds. But if you take any single act in such a course, you will always find that it has some end in view—if no other, then at all events the realisation of right. However, we are wandering from the restrictions which we had to impose upon the sphere of deliberation.

(3) Lastly, then, since deliberation is an intellectual process, it is plain that it is not concerned with immediate

facts of perception ; for these are determined by the senses, not by the intellect. No one deliberates as to whether his dinner is cooked to his liking. If deliberation had to concern itself with such things as these, action could never begin, since the facts of sense are practically endless.

Having spoken of the intellectual element in purpose, it is now time that we should speak of the emotional element.

'Impulse' or 'craving' generally is the reaching out of the soul after something. The highest form assumed by this principle is 'wish,' which is the reaching out of the soul after its highest good, or what it believes to be such. It is this highest form of impulse which enters into the composition of purpose. It fixes the end for which deliberation supplies the means.

Here we are met at the outset by a difference of opinion as to the end or object of wish. Is it one's real good? Or only what one takes to be such? Both views are attended with some difficulty. To say that no one ever wishes for anything but his true good amounts to saying that the vicious man never really wishes at all, since his true good is about the last thing he would choose. In that case all his acts must be set down as springing from passion and appetite, like those of brutes, and we must deny that he is ever prompted by the rational principle of self-love. But this seems contrary to facts. There are many bad men who will forego immediate gratification, for the prospect of what they conceive to be a greater good.

On the other hand, to say that the object of wish is simply the apparent good is to deny that anything is in its own nature worth wishing for, whether men wish for it or not. This would make everything relative to the individual, and would involve us in a violation of the Law of Contradiction : for the same thing would in that case be both worth wishing for and not worth wishing for, and things

quite contrary in their own nature would be both alike worth wishing for.

Perhaps the truth is that the object of wish is both the real and the apparent good. Nothing indeed is in itself worth wishing for but what is truly good, but relatively to the individual many things are objects of wish which are only apparent goods.

THEOPHRASTUS. But then, since wish must always be felt by some one, how are we ever to get to know what is in itself worth wishing for?

ARISTOTLE. You must take the wishes of the perfect man as your standard; he is an index to you of the truth of things; in him the absolute and the relative coincide, for his wishes are set upon that which is truly worth wishing for. We may accept the formula of Protagoras that 'Man is the measure of all things,' if only it be rightly interpreted. It is the ideally wise man who is the standard and the measure of what is right and beautiful, not any man you please to take, not yourself or your next-door neighbour. For it is only the lover of virtue who is capable of appreciating its attractions. Others are led astray by pleasure, which seems to be a good without being one. Their opinion is about as valuable as that of the child that thinks its hoop or doll of more importance than affairs of state. As well might we regard physic as being wholesome in itself, because it is so to persons in a morbid condition, as take the ideas of imperfect and peccable beings, misled by the glamour of pleasure, as the standard of the truly desirable. No, we must look away from these, and look only at the wise man. He is the standard of truth, physical, mental, and moral. For in his opinions there is this marked difference from the opinions of the multitude, that his perceptions and sentiments correspond with reality. What he feels to be bitter and sweet and hot and heavy is

really so; what he thinks of value *is* of value; and the acts that he regards as right and pleasant are so in the nature of things. But do not imagine that things are made what they are by his judgement of them: on the contrary, they are what they are, and his judgement is right because it agrees with them. For there is an absolute truth, which the wise man does not make but reveal. Truth does not depend upon his judgement any more than the flight of time depends upon the water-clock.

We must come back now to the act done on purpose, into the nature of which we have been inquiring with a view to the definition of purpose itself.

We have already defined an act done on purpose as 'a voluntary act which has been previously deliberated upon.' But if you want thoroughly to examine a thing, you should turn it about on every side. Let us therefore take as a genus what served us as differentia in this definition, and so define the act done on purpose from another point of view. Since deliberation lays before you all the ways of attaining a given end, and purpose carries out one of them, it is plain that the object of purpose is 'that one among the objects of deliberation which is selected for action.' This definition differs in form but not in substance from the preceding one: the meaning will not be altered if we say that the object of purpose is 'an act which is preferred on deliberation.' You will observe that in every form of the definition there is a reference to action. If the thing were only approved on deliberation without being carried out into action, it would be an object of opinion only, not of purpose. Purpose may be said to be the executive department in the soul of man. When wish has prescribed an end, and the intellect has passed judgement as to the means, then it remains for purpose to carry out their resolves. Even so in the old Homeric state the

chiefs in high conclave used to settle upon a line of policy, and then report it to the commons, to have it carried into effect.

Notwithstanding the way in which we have already tortured the definition of an act done on purpose, I propose to twist it into yet another shape before we let it rest. The course of our inquiry has shown us that both purpose and deliberation are concerned only with things in our own power. Herein they differ from mere wish and opinion. It has shown us also the compound nature of an act done on purpose, as involving both emotional and intellectual elements. Perhaps it would be well to bring out these points distinctly in our definition. Let us say then that the object of purpose is '*something in our own power towards the attainment of which we feel a deliberate impulse.*' From this it is easy to pass to a definition of purpose itself as, '*a deliberate impulse towards the attainment of things in our own power.*'

And so now the third step has at last been taken, and we have succeeded in defining purpose, as before we defined virtue, and before that again happiness. The definition enables us to see why purpose is so vitally important in questions of morality. It is because it is the outcome both of heart and head, and is therefore the full expression of the whole man. What a man's purpose is, that the man is. If his purpose is good, the man is good; if his purpose is bad, he is a bad man.

EUDEMUS. But if purpose is only concerned with means, I hardly see that it has all the importance which you are now assigning to it.

ARISTOTLE. Purpose being, as I have said, the executive faculty in man is concerned directly only with the means, but then they are means to a predetermined end, and the purpose cannot be judged apart from this end. It is

because of its active nature that purpose is so all-important. You might have a bare wish which never got translated into act ; you might have deliberation which resulted in nothing : but when the reason approves of what the feelings prompt, nothing can prevent action from following except some form of moral or physical paralysis.

LECTURE XVIII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 5]

VOLUNTARINESS OF VIRTUE AND VICE

HAVING shown that the end which a man sets before himself depends upon his own wish, and that the means thereto are adopted deliberately and on purpose, it is clear that we have established the equal voluntariness of virtue and vice. For both virtue and vice resolve themselves into a series of acts, and acts are always means to something beyond themselves. As means therefore they are objects of deliberation and purpose, and therefore *a fortiori* come under the head of the voluntary, which embraces even acts that are not done on purpose. We may express this argument succinctly thus—

Virtue and vice are acts ;
Acts are means ;
Means are objects of deliberation and purpose ;
Objects of deliberation and purpose are voluntary.
∴ Virtue and vice are voluntary.

This proves that virtue and vice are voluntary, but it proves a good deal more on the way. In reality we require only a single syllogism—

All acts are voluntary ;
Virtue and vice are acts ;
∴ Virtue and vice are voluntary.

In the face however of all that we hear about the involuntariness of vice, it might seem somewhat discourteous to dismiss the subject so cavalierly as this. Let us then

devote the morning to a full discussion of the question. You, Theophrastus, shall watch the case on behalf of the involuntariness of vice, and put in a plea in its favour whenever you find a fitting opportunity.

No one denies the voluntariness of virtue. But it seems to me that to admit this is to admit the equal voluntariness of vice. For virtue, to be virtue, must be attended with reason, and every rational power is a power of contraries. The physician who knows how to cure must also know how to kill. His power is a different kind of power from the irrational power of heat. Heat is only able to warm : it is not able to refrain from warming.

THEOPHRASTUS. Well, I suppose that virtue in like manner can only do right. It would be as impossible for virtue to do wrong as for heat to make us cold.

ARISTOTLE. That is well said. But when I speak of the voluntariness of virtue or vice, you must understand me to mean that the virtuous or vicious man is a free agent, that there is no force acting upon him except what comes from his own nature, except, in fact, himself. If he knows the right and the wrong, it is as open to him to choose the one as the other. Where he can do, he can refrain from doing, and where he can say 'No,' he can say 'Yes.' Since then it is in our power to do right or to do wrong, and since it is doing right or wrong that makes us good or bad, it follows that it is in our own power to be virtuous or vicious.

THEOPHRASTUS. Does not Solon or somebody say—

'None's wicked with, nor happy 'gainst, his will'?

ARISTOTLE. Your memory for once is at fault, Theophrastus. What the poet really said was—

'None's wretched with, nor happy 'gainst, his will.'

But, supposing he did say the other thing, I should simply reply that the line was partly false and partly true. It is

true enough to say that no man is unwilling to be happy: but a man's wickedness is all his own doing.

If this be denied, we must deny that there is any originating power in man, whereas I am prepared to maintain that man is pre-eminently an origin, or cause of movement. Every living being is by nature an origin in the sense that it is capable of producing many beings like itself. Thus man produces men, a brute brutes, and a plant plants. But, beyond all this, man is an origin in the sense that he originates actions, and so is capable of producing an effect upon the world in a manner unknown to lower beings. The lower animals only inherit the earth, but man's agency transforms it. If man's actions then originate in himself—and it is hard to see where else they can originate—it must be admitted that they are in his own power and voluntary.

That our actions originate in ourselves is a thing that we all feel, and the point may be further proved by the practice of legislators, who employ rewards and punishments in order to incite to virtue or deter from vice. But if our acts were not in our own power, rewards and punishments would be beside the mark. It would be a waste of good motives to bring them to bear upon anything but the real efficient. When a thing is judged not to be in our own power, no one urges us to do it or refrain from doing it. Who would exhort a starving man not to be hungry? Or a man under a broiling sun to keep himself cool? Or a man with a toothache not to feel pain?

Hence the only excuse that legislators admit for a wrong act is, if it can be shown to have been done under compulsion, or to have been due to an ignorance for which the apparent culprit was not himself responsible, that is, in one way or another not to have originated in the agent himself. Indeed so far is ignorance from being universally accepted

as a cause of involuntariness, that men are often punished for the ignorance itself as being voluntary. Witness the double penalties for drunkards, to which we have already alluded, punishment for ignorance of obvious points of law, and in common life for carelessness generally. A man has it in his own power not to get drunk, so that the ignorance which ensues must be ascribed to himself; and the same may be said of wilful negligence.

THEOPHRASTUS. But may it not be urged that there are some men so incurably careless or vicious that they really cannot help themselves?

ARISTOTLE. Granted that there are, I should like to know how the man got into such a state before we acquit him of blame, and so imply that his actions are not voluntary. Bad habits are not born with a man. They are a sort of second nature, which he superinduces upon himself by his acts. But, even if they were born with him, it would not prove that he was an involuntary agent, but simply that he was a bad man who was following the bent of his own nature.

THEOPHRASTUS. That would make all acts whatever voluntary.

ARISTOTLE. Need I remind you that that is precisely the position for which I have been all along contending? But if the acts prompted by the original nature are voluntary, how much more are those which proceed from this second nature, with which a man invests himself? How is it that a man contracts a habit of injustice except by voluntarily doing wrong to his neighbours? Or a habit of intemperance, except by voluntarily spending his time in drinking-bouts, and so on? Even then, when a habit has got the upper hand of a man, his acts must still be considered voluntary, since it was in his own power originally to avoid the formation of the habit which now enchains him.

THEOPHRASTUS. But perhaps the man does not know that his acts will thus turn into habits.

ARISTOTLE. Then he must be a downright dolt or idiot. All men understand the force of habit where it touches their interest. Why is the man who is in training for a race always running, or the man who is in training for a wrestling match always practising his muscles? It is because they know that repeated acts lead to the formation of habits or settled states, which will enable them to do the thing that they require.

THEOPHRASTUS. All the Platonists maintain that no one wishes to be unjust, that if you put it to any one whether he wished to be just or unjust, he would say that he wished to be just, and the same in the case of courage and cowardice, and virtue and vice generally. But if this be so, we must allow that vice is involuntary.

ARISTOTLE. If a man does not wish to be unjust or intemperate, it is a very odd thing to find him deliberately adopting the recognised means of becoming so. I should say that his acts are a better index of his wishes than his words.

THEOPHRASTUS. Then, if a man wishes to be unjust, he ought to be able to wish himself back into justice. But if he cannot get out of a vicious habit, how can you say that it is voluntary?

ARISTOTLE. Because he got into it of his own accord. There are many things which it is easier to get into than to get out of, for instance, illness. A man may voluntarily do the things that will make him ill—he may live recklessly and disobey the doctors; in that case he voluntarily brings an illness upon himself: but he cannot be well again from mere wishing, any more than a man can wish back a stone when he has once voluntarily thrown it from his hand. The stone will take its inevitable course, and so will the illness:

but the man voluntarily brought the illness upon himself, just as it rested with himself to pick up the stone and throw it. In the same way it was originally in the power of the unjust and intemperate man not to become so, and so they are what they are voluntarily: but when they have become so, it is no longer in their power not to be so.

I remember that Plato was quite annoyed with me when I suggested at his lecture that a man might *be* unjust involuntarily, and yet commit injustice voluntarily. He complained that I was corrupting his doctrine, which he restated in very strong language—‘that all bad men in all respects are bad against their will.’ So convinced was he of the truth of his own position, that he could only ascribe my holding a contrary view to a love of argument, or an ambition of novelty. And yet now I am inclined to think that I did not then go far enough, and that the concession that men *are* unjust involuntarily was due to reverence for my master. For the act implies the state, and what the act is, the state must be.

NICOMACHUS. I know that my question is rather off the point at present, father. But is it not a disheartening view of things to say that a man has power to become unjust, but no power to become just again?

ARISTOTLE. I did not say so, my son, and I do not know that I think so. What I said was that ‘when they have become so, it is no longer in their power not to be so.’ The sick man cannot *be* well by wishing it, nor the unjust man *be* just: but the sick man may become well, if he submits to the process of cure, and the unjust man may become just, if he chooses to unweave the web of habit in which he has enmeshed himself, and construct for himself a contrary web—always provided that it is not too late.

NICOMACHUS. That is just it, father. I cannot bear to think of its ever being too late.

ARISTOTLE. Well, my son, let us believe that while there

is life there is hope. But I see that Theophrastus is rallying for another encounter: so we must prepare to receive his charge.

THEOPHRASTUS. You do not blame a man for being physically ugly: why then should you blame him for being morally ugly?

ARISTOTLE. That depends upon whether you consider his ugliness to be his own fault or nature's. If nature gives a man a crooked back, you do not blame him for it: but if he has contracted a stoop by neglect of exercise, you do. Even if your blame will not help to straighten his shoulders, it may prevent others from becoming like him. The same thing holds true of illness and mutilation. If a man is blind from birth, or goes blind in consequence of some unavoidable malady or accident, it is a case for pity, not for blame: but if it were known that he had drunk himself blind, everybody would blame him. In fact the example of the body, to which you have appealed, tells entirely in my favour. Bodily vices that are in our own power are blamed, and those that are not in our own power are not blamed. Therefore we may argue from the fact of mental vices being blamed, that they must be in our own power.

NICOMACHUS. I thought you said, father, that we could not simply convert a universal affirmative proposition?

ARISTOTLE. Well, my son, I am glad that you remember so much of the Course on Dialectic. But what of it?

NICOMACHUS. Why you seem to me now to be arguing thus—

All vices that are in our own power are blamed.

∴ All vices that are blamed are in our own power.

ARISTOTLE. Not so, my son. You have left out some of the data. My exact words were these. 'Bodily vices that are in our own power are blamed, and those that are not in

our own power are not blamed.' We will express these two propositions in symbols thus—

All *A* is *B*

and All not-*A* is not-*B*.

These two propositions together necessitate the conclusion 'All *B* is *A*,' since they indicate that *A* and *B* exactly coincide in extension. 'All *B* is *A*' means for us, at present, 'All bodily vices that are blamed are in our own power,' which I used as an example to prove the same thing of mental vices.

NICOMACHUS. I knew I must be wrong, father. But I thought Theophrastus might like time to collect his thoughts.

THEOPHRASTUS. This is the last thing I have to say. If there's nothing in it, I must throw up the case. I suppose you will admit that a man does not make himself. Now every man has a certain bent of character, which gives him a certain idea of the aim of life, and this idea of the aim or end must necessarily determine all his actions. But as he does not give himself the idea of the end, the actions which spring from it cannot be considered to originate in the man.

ARISTOTLE. Now you are breaking into far deeper ground, Theophrastus. I do not think I will follow you into the quagmire into which you invite me, but will keep safely on the edge of it. Hitherto I have been content to identify the man with his own nature, but your argument suggests disturbing possibilities of drawing a distinction between the two, and attempting to determine how much of a man's conduct is due to what we commonly regard as the nature of the man, and how much to some special and mysterious power of origination within the soul. I do not know where such speculations would lead us, or whether it would be worth while pursuing them.

THEOPHRASTUS. I am glad you find my suggestion so profound : but I must frankly confess that you seem to detect a greater depth of meaning in it than I am aware of myself. I only want you to combat the position that, if the end is fixed for him, a man's acts cannot be called voluntary.

ARISTOTLE. Your words brought back to my mind glimpses that I have sometimes had of a difficulty in the background. So I will answer you cautiously, but in a way sufficient for the position which I am concerned to defend, namely, that vice is as voluntary as virtue. Let us therefore see what would be the effect of accepting or of rejecting your suggestion.

First, let us suppose that we accept it.

A man's idea of good is fixed for him by nature or in what way soever. Very well, in that case a man's evil acts cannot be ascribed to himself in any sense that would call for blame. His low or distorted idea of good is his misfortune, not his fault. But neither can the good man's acts be ascribed to himself in any sense that would call for praise. His high and true conception of good is a gift to him from a bountiful nature. Both alike follow out in their actions the end that is set before them, expecting thereby to obtain for themselves the highest good. But it is as though the one were gifted by nature with a keen and penetrating sight so as to have a clear view of the distant goal, whereas the other were purblind from birth and mistook some wholly different object for it. The first would be 'good-natured' in the proper sense of the term, that is to say, he would be favoured by nature, being endowed from birth with a precious and incommunicable power to detect the true end of life. But what voluntariness would there be about the actions of either one or the other?

THEOPHRASTUS. Might it not be maintained that though

the end was fixed, yet the good man was free to choose among the means, and that in that sense virtue was voluntary?

ARISTOTLE. It might. But such a contention will not affect the point at issue, because the same free agency in action is open equally to the bad man.

Now let us turn to the other side of the question, and suppose that we reject your suggestion.

A man may be himself a co-operating cause with nature and education in determining his own idea of good. For a man undoubtedly has power over his acts. But his acts go to form habits, his habits are part of his character, and his character determines his idea of good. This I believe myself to be a truer statement of the case than the other. But the only point which concerns us at present is that it makes vice as voluntary as virtue.

This indeed is a conclusion from which I see no escape. For if it be true that the end is fixed for a man independently of himself, then the only freedom that there can be about virtue lies in the free choice of means to a predetermined end, but this choice of means belongs equally to the vicious man. On the other hand, if it be false to say that the end is entirely fixed *for* the man, and not to some extent *by* him, in this case also whatever degree of freedom there may be about virtue, there will be precisely the same about vice. So that, turn the matter which way we will, virtue and vice are exactly on a par as regards voluntariness.

Our doctrine then is that virtue and vice are alike voluntary, because they are both habits or states, which are formed by a repetition of certain acts, and the acts which lead to their formation are voluntary. But we may draw a distinction between the voluntariness of acts and the voluntariness of states. The first is primary and direct, the second indirect and derivative. We are masters of our

acts from beginning to end, if we are acquainted with the particular circumstances under which they are done: but we are masters only of the beginning of our states, in the end they may get beyond our control. Acts are outward and visible, and we can know where we are with respect to them; states are inward and spiritual, we cannot watch their growth or calculate their power; they creep upon us like a disease, till at last they manifest themselves irresistibly in action, whether for weal or woe. It is only because the original direction of them lay with us that they are to be called voluntary.

LECTURE XIX

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 6, 7]

THE MORAL VIRTUES IN DETAIL: COURAGE—ITS SPHERE AND DEFINITION

ABOUT moral virtue in general we have said already all that we require to say. We have shown its genus to be a state of the mind, its proximate genus to be a state of the purpose or will, its differentia to be that it is a mean ; we have shown besides that this mean is determined by reason ; also that virtue, being a state or habit, is engendered by a repetition of certain acts and tends to the performance of the same for their own sakes, not with a view to any extrinsic consequences ; lastly, we have shown, or perhaps I should rather say 'assumed,' that virtue depends upon ourselves and is voluntary.

I propose therefore now to devote several lectures to an examination of the moral virtues in detail, following the lines already laid down in our scheme. We shall dwell upon the nature of each, and shall show the precise sphere with which it deals, and the way in which it deals with it. As to the number of the moral virtues, that of course makes itself apparent from the list : but it is not a point on which I wish to dogmatize. Under different social circumstances

different mental states may become prominent as virtues, still under the direction of the same reason.

First, then, let us speak about courage.

Its sphere, as we have already said, is the feelings of fear and confidence. The virtue consists in having these feelings under due control by reason. Courage then is a mean with respect to feelings of fear and confidence. That may do as a rough definition to start on. But the sphere of courage, in any sense of that virtue in which we are concerned with it, is far from being co-extensive with fear and confidence. Let us endeavour then to ascertain the exact sphere of the special virtue of courage.

All evil things are the objects of fear, for instance, ill-fame, poverty, disease, friendlessness, death: so that fear is defined as 'an anticipation of evil.' But, to make courage coincident with fear would be manifestly to assign to it too wide a field; for there are some things which it is right and proper to fear, for instance, ill-fame. The man who fears this is a right-feeling and modest man; the man who does not fear it is a shameless fellow, whom it would be a violent metaphor to call 'brave,' simply because he and the brave man agree in the absence of fear.

Poverty and disease differ from ill-fame, in that fear is not in place with regard to them: for perhaps we ought not to fear anything but what proceeds from vice or is in some way due to ourselves. Nevertheless it is only by a metaphor that the man who is free from fear with regard to these things is called brave. The nerve which a man displays in risking a large sum of money with a view to a future return may be called courage in a certain sense, but it is not the exact quality we are now concerned to define. Nor yet, if a man bears up with a stout heart against the loss of wealth, is he to be called brave in the literal meaning of the term.

Generally then, there are certain kinds of fear that do not

imply cowardice, and certain kinds of confidence that do not entitle a man to be called courageous. No man is a coward for fearing insult to his wife or children, or for dreading the evil eye, and on the other hand the man who does not mind being flogged displays bravado rather than bravery. The question then arises—‘What sort of fear does the virtue of courage regulate?’ And to this we reply ‘The fear of death.’ Death is the thing that inspires most fear, as being the end of all things, and it is held that there is nothing further for the dead man either of good or evil. But not even the fear of death in every shape is the proper sphere of courage—not, for instance, at sea or on the bed of sickness. The courageous man, it is true, will be free from fear at sea, though in a different way from the sailors, whose freedom from fear is grounded on experience and hope, but the positive virtue of courage cannot be called out either there or on the sick bed, as there is no opportunity for the display of prowess, and no particular glory in being drowned or succumbing to an illness.

It is the battle-field then mainly that is the true sphere of the virtue of courage, so that in the strict sense of the term he will be called brave *who is fearless with regard to a noble death and mortal dangers that are close at hand*.

THEOPHRASTUS. I don’t know why you should deny courage to the sailor, who is undismayed amid the storm.

ARISTOTLE. Because his apparent courage is merely the result of experience. We will speak of that later.

THEOPHRASTUS. But I suppose you might have two sailors equally experienced, one of whom showed himself courageous and the other not.

ARISTOTLE. But what would he have to show himself courageous against? There’s no glory in fighting the waves. You’re fortunate if you escape them—that’s all.

THEOPHRASTUS. What nobler death could you have than

that of a captain who perished in the gallant attempt to save his passengers and crew?

ARISTOTLE. Well, such a death as that would come under our definition. For wherever death with honour is possible, there also is courage possible.

You must bear in mind that it is not courage as a mere quality, but courage as a good quality, or virtue, which we have undertaken to define. It is the motive which determines the character of an act. Take away the noble motive, and though an act may display fearlessness or confidence, it cannot be called courageous, nor can the habit from which the act proceeds be dignified with the title of a virtue, however useful it may be to the individual who possesses it. The fearlessness then of the sailor does not deserve to be called courage, unless it be prompted by some higher motive than the desire for self-preservation, which is common to all animals.

EUDEMUS. In defining the brave man why do you say 'dangers that are close at hand'?

ARISTOTLE. Because distant dangers do not affect the imagination or cause fear. A man may be courageous enough with regard to a danger that is ten years off, and yet be ready to die with fear when he is brought face to face with it. Death looms in the distance for us all, and yet the most cowardly of us goes about quite cheerfully, and snaps his fingers in the face of the bugbear—until he thinks that it is near. The same dulness of imagination perhaps accounts for the fact that a man who proves himself chary enough of his life on the field of battle may be a spendthrift, and fling away the means of living with a good heart.

EUDEMUS. You said that fear might be defined as an 'anticipation of evil,' just as I have heard you say on other occasions that hope might be defined as an 'anticipation

of good.' Now there are other evils besides bodily evils. Suppose then that a man foresaw that he was about to suffer the pangs of envy or jealousy or the discomfort and humiliation of shame, would you say that 'fear' would be the right term to describe his state of mind?

ARISTOTLE. His state of mind would come under the definition of fear which I gave you, and which is not my own, but inherited from Plato. I am inclined, however, to agree with you in thinking that it might be more strictly correct to confine fear to the anticipation of bodily evil in the shape of death or pain. In this strict sense the term 'fear' might be defined as 'a pain or disturbance arising from the presence in the imagination of the idea of impending evil destructive to life or involving physical pain.'

EUDEMUS. This restriction of meaning would have the advantage of rendering the sphere of courage co-extensive with that of fear, and so avoiding the necessity of all the exclusions which you made.

THEOPHRASTUS. For my part I am more inclined to ask why the exclusions should have been made. Socrates, as we know, would embrace under the conception of courage the very things which you have omitted, namely, dangers at sea and in sickness and the evils of poverty, and other things besides, such as facing political opposition: he would even extend the name 'brave' to the man who conquers his desires and resists the attractions of pleasure.

ARISTOTLE. On the same principle you might give the name 'brave' to the man whom we call 'gentle.' For does he not resist and overcome the impulse to wrath? But there is nothing to be gained by removing the landmarks of thought. So hazy a notion as this not unnaturally evaporates, as we find it does with Socrates, into a confusion of courage with virtue in general. *This* fault at all events I am determined to avoid, even if I fall into the opposite one of

unduly restricting the field. Instead of endeavouring to grasp in a single conception all the heterogeneous uses to which the term courage can by any analogy be applied, I have fixed upon the original physical sense and endeavoured to idealize that. If you want a proof of the importance attached to physical courage, look at the practice of states. Is it not for the successful soldier that the highest honours are reserved both in free commonwealths and at the courts of princes? And not without reason: since this virtue is necessary for the very existence of a state.

EUDEMUS. You began by saying 'All evil things are the objects of fear.' May I ask—To whom are they objects of fear—to the coward or to the brave man? If the brave man only endures things that are fearful to the coward, there does not seem to be anything very sublime about his virtue, whereas, if the things he endures are fearful to himself, courage would seem to make a man full of fear instead of free from it.

ARISTOTLE. Your question sounds worthy of Zeno the Eleatic: but I suspect you are aware yourself that there is an easier way out of your dilemma than out of his. The fearful, like the pleasant and the good, may be either relative or absolute. By the absolutely fearful we mean what is fearful to human nature, and so would have terrors to every man of sense. But things may be fearful relatively to the coward which are not fearful at all in themselves, or only slightly so. It is not so much in enduring things that are fearful to the coward that the brave man shows his bravery as in enduring things that are fearful to every one.

EUDEMUS. When you say 'every one,' do you include himself?

ARISTOTLE. Certainly, else where would the courage come in, if the things had no terrors for him? A stone would on that showing be the most courageous of beings,

for it is never troubled with fear at all. We do not however call a stone 'fearless,' because that term implies that a thing is capable of fear. We are talking, you must remember, of a brave *man*. He is undismayed as a man should be, not as some being differently constituted, who does not know what fear is. An utter callousness to pain is no ideal of ours any more than an utter insensibility to pleasure: now fear, as we have said, is an anticipation of pain. Therefore, as man is liable to pain, the brave man as well as others will be liable to fear. His bravery consists in his overcoming fear at the call of right. But there are some occasions on which he cannot even be expected to overcome fear, some dangers so appalling that the very bravest will quail before them, such as thunder-bolts, earthquakes and inundations of the sea.

EUDEMUS. You said that the brave man will fear what is fearful to every one. But will the things he fears be as fearful to him as they are to every one else?

ARISTOTLE. They will not be so fearful to him as they are to the coward. For the coward goes wrong in overestimating the fearfulness of things that are really fearful and mistaking for such things that are not so. But on the other hand, they will be more fearful to him than they are to the foolhardy or rash man, who goes wrong owing to a misplaced and mistimed confidence. Between these two the brave man steers the middle course. We may say that he is the man who endures and fears what he ought, and from the right motive and in the right way and at the right time, and likewise feels confidence: for the brave man both feels and acts duly and as reason directs.

THEOPHRASTUS. Of these various conditions which do you consider to be the most essential to an act of courage?

ARISTOTLE. The motive, as I have told you before, is the most essential to courage as a *virtue*. Now the end

proposed by any act must be identical with the end or aim of the state of mind from which that act proceeds. But the brave man regards his courage as morally right. Of this nature therefore must be the end: for everything derives its character from its end. Therefore any brave act, to be truly such, must be done for the sake of right.

NICOMACHUS. That sounds like a syllogism, father; only it seems rather involved.

ARISTOTLE. It is a syllogism and more. For the minor premiss is supported by a reason, which implies a preceding syllogism. I will condense the statement, so that you may the more easily detect its form.

The end of the state is the end of the act.

Right conduct is the end of the state (for what characterizes anything is its end).

∴ Right conduct is the end of the act.

The pro-syllogism, which supports the minor premiss, would, if drawn out in full, run thus—

What characterizes anything is its end.

Right conduct characterizes the state of courage.

∴ Right conduct is the end of the state.

But, to come back to our subject—

Of those who are in excess he who is so from an absence of fear is without a name. We have found already that there are many mental phenomena which we have to recognise, for which common language has provided no name. But you may set such a person down as a sort of madman or insensate, if he were afraid of nothing, not even of an earthquake. Some barbarians seem to pride themselves on this mad kind of insensibility to fear. The Celts will not budge from a tumbling wall, and Ephorus tells us that, when the tide sweeps into their houses, they refuse to retreat, but take arms and fight against it; Herodotus also mentions how the Psylli perished in an attack upon the

Sirocco. For the other form of excess, which is due to over-confidence in danger, we have a name. It is rashness, and the man who exhibits it is called 'rash.'

EUDEMUS. Don't you remember telling Theophrastus that you thought we had better drop this distinction between the two forms of excess?

ARISTOTLE. So I did. Verily habit is as much a cause of human action as any impulse, rational or otherwise.

THEOPHRASTUS. It hasn't been my lot to observe many people who suffered from over-confidence in danger, though I've seen many who were over-confident out of it. Your 'rash' man seems to me generally to be a bit of a braggart and a pretender to bravery. He blusters a great deal beforehand, but when it comes to facing the danger, he is apt to display the white feather, whereas the truly brave man is prompt in action but quiet before.

ARISTOTLE. Your remark is quite true as an observation on human nature. The bully is very often a coward in disguise. But still there is such a thing as facing dangers which neither right nor reason calls upon us to face; and this state of mind we may ascribe to an overstock of confidence.

The coward, on the other hand, is understocked with this feeling and overstocked with its opposite, fear. He fears what he ought not, and in a way he ought not, and so on. But though he suffers from the two faults of lack of confidence and undue preponderance of fear, it is the latter that chiefly betrays him.

The coward, you see, is a despondent sort of person, in whom the faculty of hope is feeble. Whereas the courageous man, on the contrary, is of a sanguine disposition, and buoyed up by hope.

All three characters then have to do with the same things, namely, fear and confidence, but they are in different states

with regard to them. The rash man and the coward are both in excess and defect, the one having too much confidence and too little fear, the other too much fear and too little confidence, while the brave man hits the happy mean with regard to both feelings.

We may therefore say that courage is a mean state with regard to things that inspire fear or confidence, in matters involving danger to life and limb. But we must always bear in mind that the motive must be a noble one, and that, to entitle courage to be considered praiseworthy, and therefore virtuous, the brave man must choose to face danger because it is right to do so, or wrong not to do so.

This definition disposes of a great many spurious forms of courage ; and the first that it is fatal to is the courage that is claimed by some people for the suicide. 'He must be brave,' they say, 'to face death in this way. I should not have the courage to cut my own throat.' But the question is—what is his motive? Generally, you will find that it is to escape poverty or the pangs of blighted love—for money or woman are at the bottom of most cases of suicide. But at all events it is to escape something which the suicide regards as more painful than death ; so that suicide is a form of cowardice, not of courage. Manliness is shown in enduring evils, but effeminacy in flying from them. What does Agathon say on this subject ?

'For cowards, when they cannot conquer pain,
Rush to the arms of death.'

EUDEMUS. May not the pain be so excessive that no one could be expected to endure it, just as the poets tell that Chiron prayed to the Gods to be relieved of his immortality owing to the pangs of his wound ?

ARISTOTLE. We are discussing statecraft, not mythology. Suicide is always an injustice to the state. The most that

such an act can expect is pardon, not praise. It can never be regarded as courage. To choose a lesser pain instead of a greater is done on the same principle as choosing pleasure. Death becomes pleasant to the suicide by comparison with greater pains. If death were pleasant in itself, we should have men dropping into it from mere lack of self-control, just as now they choose with their eyes open the pleasant paths that lead to it. But you do not call them brave on that account.

LECTURE XX

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 8, 9]

SOME SPURIOUS FORMS OF COURAGE: COURAGE CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH PAIN

BESIDES the seeming courage of suicide, which we have found to be a form of cowardice, there are five other spurious kinds of courage, which fail to satisfy our definition, but which may all of them have a certain value in inducing men to obey orders under circumstances of danger. We will enumerate them first, and then proceed to dwell upon them in detail.

- (1) Civil courage.
- (2) The courage of experience.
- (3) The courage of passion.
- (4) The courage of hope.
- (5) The courage of ignorance.

(1) By 'civil courage' I mean the feeling which prompts citizens to endure dangers out of respect for public opinion. This courage may be said to be due to law, whether of the written or of the unwritten kind. Most states, from the instinct of self-preservation, visit cowardice with penalties and disgrace, and confer rewards and honour upon valour. Wherever this code is most strictly enforced by public opinion, you will find the citizens bravest. We have instances of this type of character in Homer's heroes.

'Hector,' he says, 'was seized with shame,' which prevented his retreating, when Achilles advanced into the fray; and Hector is represented as thinking to himself 'Polydamas will be the first to heap reproach upon me,' Polydamas standing in his mind for public opinion. Similarly Diomede is deterred from flight by the thought—

'For Hector will some day say, as he harangues among the Trojans,
Tydides scared by me.'

The thought of his enemies jeering at him is intolerable to the hero who pants for honour.

We have mentioned this form of courage first, because it approaches most nearly to the true in the dignity of its motive. It is due to shame and a love of honour, with its obverse the fear of disgrace. These motives are generally, though not invariably, good. They serve in the main to keep one up to the common and accepted standard of morality, though they may deter one from going beyond it. Shame, as we have seen, is not a virtue, though it is an approach to being a virtue. The love of honour we have recognised as being, within due limits, one of the moral virtues.

But true courage, like all real virtue, springs from a sense of right. It is founded, not on a love for the passing opinions of men, but for that moral beauty which is part of the eternal order of the universe. The chief point in which civil courage falls short of true courage is this. It will nerve a man to face dangers so long as he is before the eyes of the world, but no longer, whereas the truly courageous man will act in the same way whether any one is there to see him or not.

Along with civil courage we may mention a lower form which proceeds, not from fear of disgrace, but from fear of pain. Men may be more afraid of their commanders than

they are of the enemy, and the same fear may be continued from habit even when the actual cause is removed. You remember how Hector threatens his men—

'If any cowering far from fight I find,
I warrant he shall not escape the dogs.'

THEOPHRASTUS. I remember words to that effect from Hector: but the passage you give seems rather to represent the words of Agamemnon in the second Iliad.

ARISTOTLE. Well, Hector or Agamemnon, what does it matter to the illustration? We have an extreme form of the same compulsory courage in the Persian soldiers who are lashed into battle by their officers, and a milder form in the case of drawing up troops in positions from which they cannot escape. But plainly there is no virtue in a courage which is due only to compulsion.

THEOPHRASTUS. I don't think the Homeric heroes would be obliged to you for ranking them along with the Persian soldiers.

ARISTOTLE. Perhaps I do owe them an apology. It was convenience of classification that led me into doing this despite to them. The tie of connexion between the two forms of courage is that they are both due to compulsion: but the moral compulsion from which the former proceeds is a very much higher thing than the motive which dictates the latter.

NICOMACHUS. Might we not say, father, that the latter is due to physical compulsion?

ARISTOTLE. Not if we are to be consistent with the meaning which we formerly assigned to that term: but in a loose sense we can.

(2) Next, we have the courage of experience. People who understand all about a thing may present an appearance of great courage to those who are inexperienced on

the same subject, without their being really braver men. Thus the sailor appears brave to the landsman, and the professional soldier to the civilian. There are a great many empty terrors in war which experience enables one to estimate at their true value. Then again the professional soldier, owing to his experience, is best able to inflict without receiving damage; he has skill in the use of weapons, and is provided with such weapons as are best for purposes both of offence and defence. So when professional soldiers are pitted against men who have no such advantages, it is almost like a fight between armed men and unarmed, or between athletes and amateurs. All this gives the professional soldier a confidence which makes him appear brave. But his courage, in so far as derived from this source, is only apparent. In the arena also it is not the bravest men who are the best fighters, but those who are strongest and have their bodies in the best condition.

This kind of courage, not being grounded on a sense of right, will not bear the strain of real danger. The very same experience which teaches men contempt for a sham danger teaches them respect for a real one. And so when an army finds itself outnumbered or outmanœuvred, or in some way at a serious disadvantage, the professional soldiers are often the first to fly, whereas the citizen-troops die at their post. The latter think death better than dis-honour; the former do not, and were only induced to face the danger from the first under the idea that they were superior. When this illusion is dispelled they take to their heels, which is very unlike the conduct of the brave man. Not so long ago, during the Sacred War, we had an instance of what I am saying. The citizens of Coroneia, being hard pressed by Onomarchus the Phocian, who was in possession of their citadel, shut the gates on themselves so that they

could not desert their country if they would, and died to a man on the level ground round the temple of Hermes, whereas their professional allies fled from the battle at an early stage, when they found that Chiron, one of the Boeotarchs, was dead.

To have the confidence then which arises from experience is no proof of the possession of true courage. If a man knows that a thing will not hurt him, small credit to him for not being afraid of it. It is when he thinks that it will, or may hurt him, and still confronts it, that he shows himself to be brave. Courage is much more an affair of the emotions than of the intellect.

EUDEMUS. I suppose it was this courage of experience, or soldier's courage, which Socrates had in view when he declared courage to be a science. But don't you think he was wrong in speaking as though courage consisted in a knowledge of dangers? Ought he not rather to have said that it consisted in a knowledge of the remedies against danger? It is not because the sailor knows the danger that he is ready to run up a mast in a storm, but because he knows how to guard against the danger.

ARISTOTLE. I agree with what you said last, that the thing which gives men confidence is the knowledge how to avoid the danger. The knowledge of the danger itself has exactly the reverse effect. Ignorance in that case is a better source of courage than experience.

EUDEMUS. I can see that experience cannot be identified with courage merely because it gives confidence. For, if so, strength would have to be called courage, and wealth too, which is a great source of confidence. The poor man, as Theognis has it, is bound hand and foot by his poverty.

NICOMACHUS. What was it exactly, father, that Socrates said about courage?

ARISTOTLE. He said a good deal, my son. But you may

take this statement as being perhaps on the whole the best expression of his view—that 'courage is the knowledge of what ought to inspire fear or confidence both in war and in all other matters.'

THEOPHRASTUS. Do you think that Socrates really meant by this what Eudemus understands him to mean?

ARISTOTLE. Socrates' whole point of view in dealing with virtue is so different from my own that it is difficult for me to judge fairly of his statements. He looks at virtue from the side of the reason and seems to leave out of account the part played by the emotions and the will, on which I am always anxious to insist. I can see however that the statement that courage is a science is in perfect accordance with the general doctrine of Socrates. For if virtue generally be knowledge and vice ignorance, then any particular virtue will be some particular branch of knowledge. Now courage, according to Socrates, is the knowledge of what is really dreadful and what is not. Death is not really dreadful to a good man when it is right for him to meet it. For, as he said before his judges, 'No evil can happen to a good man either in life or in death.'

THEOPHRASTUS. That sounds very comforting doctrine, but I don't see that it really is. The conviction is only arrived at by refusing to call anything evil but what springs from vice. If a man is really good, he is *ex hypothesi* secure against that. But a good man may get knocked on the head by a burglar or be tortured by a tyrant in this life, and I suppose it is conceivable that analogous mishaps may be in store for him in another.

ARISTOTLE. Quite so: you have only to attain the conviction that nothing is really worth caring about but wisdom and virtue, and then you will be ready to meet all chances with serenity. But this conviction perhaps does not come so easily to every one as to Socrates.

(3) Let us come on now to the third spurious form of courage, which we called the courage of passion. You may take 'passion' now either in the restricted sense, in which it is equivalent to spirit, or in the wide sense in which it is applied to feeling in general. There is hardly any feeling which may not be strong enough to lead men to brave danger and even death.

Love finds its way to its end in spite of obstacles. Fill the young man's soul with this passion, and Leander swims the Hellespont, another enamoured youth slays the tyrant at Metapontium, while Orpheus braves death and hell for his Eurydice. Nor need the love be a noble one to inspire this boldness. How many daring acts do adulterers commit simply to gratify their lust! The lower animals even are as susceptible of this sort of courage as men. Even the timid stag becomes dangerous in the rutting season.

Or again, take the appetite of hunger. Of how much heroism has it been the source! You have heard of the reply of Clearchus to Artaxerxes—that 'no one would dare to treat with the Greeks about peace until they had had their breakfast.' If this be a source of courage the ass must be deemed courageous; for, when he is hungry, he will not desist from his grazing however much you beat him.

But it is chiefly the passion of anger that blinds men to a sense of danger, and makes them rush, like a wounded wild beast, upon the foe. Anger proceeds from spirit, and, because the brave are full of spirit, people are apt to confound this angry recklessness with true courage. Homer testifies to the way in which spirit incites men to meet dangers: 'he imparted might,' he says, 'to his spirit'; and 'he aroused their might and spirit'; and 'sharp might through his nostrils'; and 'his blood boiled.' All such expressions seem to indicate the rousing and outbreak of spirit.

THEOPHRASTUS. I must give you credit for the other quotations, though I think you would find that the third refers to the delight of Odysseus on revealing himself to his aged father, not to anger; but the fourth, I am sure, does not occur in Homer from beginning to end.

ARISTOTLE. Well, spirit is the source of love as well as of hate, so that a burst of affection is as much the outcome of it as a fit of wrath. As for your objection against my fourth quotation, all I can say is that, if the words do not occur in Homer, they might have done so. They would be no mere metaphor, but a literal statement of fact, since passion, as I explained to you in the course on Physics, is a boiling up of blood about the heart.

THEOPHRASTUS. That was the very thing which made me so confident in my assertion that the words do not occur in Homer. I could not fail to have been struck by so remarkable a confirmation, or rather anticipation, of your doctrine.

ARISTOTLE. The courage of anger, being common to man with the brutes, cannot be true courage, since no brute is capable of virtue. The brutes are goaded into wrath by pain. If they are wounded, or afraid of being so, they will rush with blind rage to the attack, but if they are safe in some thicket, they seldom do so. As a rule, if you let them alone, they let you alone—unless indeed they are hungry, and hunger is a form of pain. If men fight, like brutes, merely because they feel the pain of anger and desire the pleasure of revenge, we cannot dignify them with the name of brave, but must simply call them pugnacious, since their valour is not directed by reason.

As the last form of courage erred in making courage purely an affair of the intellect, so this errs in taking account only of the emotional element. All true virtue has something in it, both of the head and of the heart,

seeing that is a state of purpose. But of the two I should say that this approaches more nearly to true courage than does the apparent courage of experience. This at least has the makings of true courage about it: it affords the rough material which can be worked up into true courage, if you supply purpose and the motive of right. Spirit is the natural ally of reason, and in the truly brave man will be perfectly under its bidding. Without a fair share of spirit a man will lack the active side of courage however much he may possess the passive. For it is quite possible for a man to count death better than dishonour, and to expose his life to every needful risk, and yet not be a good fighter. Why? Simply because he has not the stomach to kill his adversaries. In order to do this effectually and with gusto he requires the co-operation of the brute instinct. We may see the force of spirit in the case of children, in whom reason is not yet developed. Some of them are ready to fight like gamecocks, and never know when they are beaten. Let the state cherish such: for they will prove themselves hereafter valiant defenders of the fatherland, if this spirit is directed by reason to right ends. Of the five lower forms that we have mentioned the courage which comes from spirit is the most spontaneous and natural. Civil courage is indeed a more valuable quality, because it is directed to a high, though not the highest end, but it is based on convention and not on nature.

(4) The fourth spurious form of courage is what we have called the courage of hope. It may come from a sanguine disposition, which is a good thing, as far as it goes, or simply from a series of past successes, which engender the expectation of success in the future. It has the element of confidence about it, which is seen also in true courage. But the brave man's confidence is based on the resolution to dare all for the sake of right, whereas the confidence of the sanguine

man is either irrational or grounded on a hasty induction. If the event belies his expectation, it is apt to vanish, and then the sanguine man beats a retreat.

THEOPHRASTUS. I suppose that his hopes then take the form of expecting to run faster than the enemy.

ARISTOTLE. Very likely. But it is clear that so unstable a thing as hope cannot be a source of true courage. If it were, then wine would be a source of courage, for it certainly supplies hope. It is its stability, as much as anything, that distinguishes true courage from all spurious imitations. True courage is the settled habit of feeling confidence and fear to precisely the right extent. The surest test of this is a man's conduct under a sudden danger. Even a man of a timid disposition may face danger and death with dignity, if he has had time to prepare himself for it beforehand, but to be fearless and undisturbed amid sudden dangers can only come from habit—or from the grace of nature.

(5) The courage of ignorance, which we mentioned last, can have no claim to be true courage. It arises from a mere mistake, and vanishes as soon as the mistake is discovered. This was the courage that led the Argives to rush with such alacrity upon the Lacedaemonians at the Long Walls of Corinth. They did not know that there were Spartan hearts beating behind the Sicyonian shields.

This form of courage resembles that of the sanguine man, but is inferior to it. For the sanguine man exhibits some amount of self-reliance, and endures the danger for a time, whereas the courage which is based on mere ignorance has no staying power at all. It is the opposite in a way of the courage of experience. That arises from a knowledge that there is no danger, this from an ignorance that there is any. A child playing with a rattle-snake may be taken as the type of this form of courage.

To sum up, then, courage, to be worthy of the name, must not proceed from a fear of disgrace, still less from a fear of punishment, nor yet from a knowledge that the danger is not so great as it appears, nor from appetite or anger or any brute instinct, nor again from mere hope of success, nor, lastly, from ignorance of the danger: but it must spring from an impulse of the soul directed by reason to the attainment of right. And further, to be courage in the strict and literal meaning of the term, not in any metaphorical or derived sense, what it leads one to face must be physical pain and danger to life and limb, not other evils, however intolerable, which do not tend directly to the destruction of being.

NICOMACHUS. You began, father, by saying that the sphere of courage was the feelings of fear and confidence, but we have heard a good deal more about fear than about confidence. I suppose it is not concerned equally with both.

ARISTOTLE. That is so, my son. Courage is far more concerned with quelling fear, and rendering a man cool and self-possessed in danger, than with moderating confidence. There is nothing so characteristic of this virtue as the endurance of pain. This introduces an element of pain into the virtue itself, which is the reason why it is so highly praised. The harder a thing is, the more praise it deserves. Now it is harder to endure pain than to abstain from pleasure.

THEOPHRASTUS. On that principle I suppose we might say that courage is a higher virtue than temperance?

ARISTOTLE. Harder certainly, and if harder, then rarer, and therefore higher. But as there are so many spurious forms of courage, I daresay you might find more people who are called courageous than who are called temperate.

EUDEMUS. I have a difficulty in reconciling what you are

saying now about the painfulness of courage with your previous statement that the man who is pained at enduring dangers is a coward, or at all events, not brave.

ARISTOTLE. The means are painful to the brave man, because he is a man, but the end is always pleasant. The joy of noble action leads the brave man cheerfully to face what is painful to flesh and blood. A virtuous act, I maintain, is always pleasant in itself, because what it is in itself must be judged by its end : but sometimes it is only the end that is pleasant, in other words, the only pleasure there is about it is the pleasure of doing right. Let no man imagine that virtue is a bed of roses. If he is looking for any reward of virtue other than virtue itself, I am afraid he may be disappointed. The reward of virtue is the beauty of the act. The test of true virtue is whether this is reward enough. To the good man it always is, the pleasure of right-doing being of an incomparably finer kind than any grosser form of satisfaction. But just because it is finer, it is less obvious, and is apt to be obscured by its surroundings. In the same way the boxer's aim, which is the crown and honours of victory, is always pleasant, but the being knocked about is disagreeable and painful, seeing that he is of flesh and blood, and so is all the toil of training ; the number of these unpleasant accompaniments might lead some people to think that the prize was not worth contending for.

THEOPHRASTUS. But the boxer generally lives to enjoy his honours, whereas the brave man may die, and be insensible to honour, or it may never even be accorded to him, if there were no one to tell the tale of his heroism.

ARISTOTLE. I think you are forgetting that honour is not the hero's motive, but the beauty of the act. Of that nothing can deprive him.

THEOPHRASTUS. I am afraid I was for the moment. It is a conception which it is hard to rise to.

ARISTOTLE. And yet we must rise to it, if we wish to be virtuous. It is a true saying that 'the beautiful is hard.' The brave man, being necessarily a good man, is therefore happy. He is the very man to whom life is best worth living, and yet he is the man who will go and sacrifice it all, with his eyes open, at the call of right.

NICOMACHUS. I suppose, father, that an army of really brave men would be invincible?

ARISTOTLE. Invincible, but not necessarily victorious, as they might not have technical skill. And then think what a shocking waste of good material it would be to use them for the everyday purposes of war! Men with far less valuable lives can be found, who are ready to imperil them in the profession of arms for a chance of small gain.

We must now quit the subject of courage. I hope that the treatment I have given it may at least furnish you with some rough idea of what it is.

LECTURE XXI

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, III. 10-12]

TEMPERANCE—ITS SPHERE AND DEFINITION :

TEMPERANCE COMPARED WITH COURAGE

ARISTOTLE. Having treated of courage, let us next deal with temperance : for these seem to be the virtues of the irrational parts of the soul.

NICOMACHUS. Forgive me, father, for interrupting you at starting. But I gathered from what you said that all the moral virtues, including even justice, were the perfections of the irrational part of the soul. Yet now you speak as though courage and temperance were exclusively so.

ARISTOTLE. Moral virtue generally is the perfection of the irrational *part* of the soul, whose praise is in obedience. But by the irrational *parts* I meant, when I spoke, the two impulses which we have in common with the lower animals. It is the special function of courage and temperance to bring spirit and appetite respectively under the yoke of reason.

Now appetite always aims at pleasure. So pleasures of some kind are the sphere of temperance. Roughly speaking, then, we may say that temperance is a mean with regard to pleasures. For, though it is concerned also with pains, it is

so in a less degree and in quite a different way from that in which it is concerned with pleasures. Whatever is the sphere of temperance will also be the sphere of intemperance.

Let us endeavour then to ascertain what pleasures are the special sphere of this virtue.

Pleasure is a mental affection ; and the mind, at least under normal conditions, can only be reached through the body. All pleasures then, of whatever kind, must affect the mind through the body ; and, if through the body, then through one of the five known inlets of sense, namely, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. But there are some pleasures in which the use of the body is a mere accident and others in which it is essential. The former we call mental and the latter bodily pleasures.

If I learn some theorem in geometry, it gives me pleasure. The pleasure can only be conveyed to my mind through symbols which appeal to sense. But the pleasure in no way arises from the symbols, but from the truth into which they are translated within my mind. This then may be called a purely mental pleasure.

Again, if honour be done to me, I feel pleasure. The honour must be conveyed through some form of words which I hear, or, if they are written, see ; or else it must consist in some series of acts which I see or feel, or which in some way affect my senses. If I am mistaken for a God, and incense is burned to me, then the honour is conveyed through the sense of smell ; if I am invited out to dinner, and given the tid-bits, then the honour is conveyed through the sense of taste. Whether I like or dislike the smell of incense in itself is quite beside the point : it is not in itself, but as a sign of honour, that it gives me pleasure, if it does so. Again, whether I like the tid-bits or not is equally beside the point : it is not the glutton's pleasure that I feel,

but the pleasure of honour, which happens in this case to enter the soul through gluttony's door. The very same acts might give me no pleasure at all, if they were not interpreted within my mind to mean that honour was being paid to me. The love of honour, then, like the love of learning, may be regarded as a purely mental pleasure.

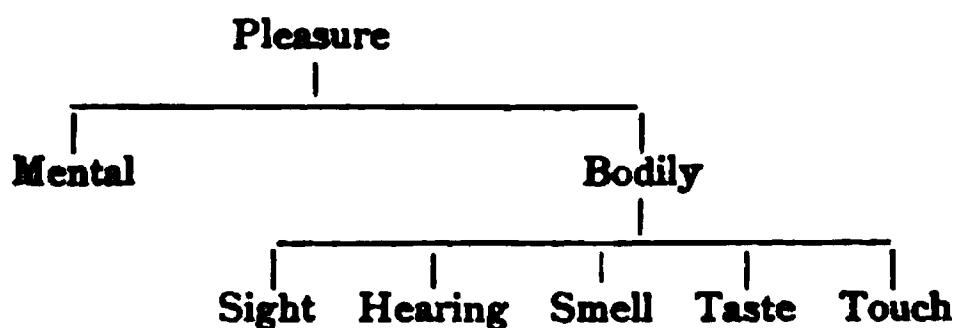
Now we may separate off the mental pleasures to begin with, as not being the sphere either of temperance or intemperance.

NICOMACHUS. You used to reprove me, father, for being too fond of study. I am glad to find that I was not intemperate on that account.

ARISTOTLE. It is foolish and wrong, my son, to pursue even learning to the detriment of health, since the mind is the necessary instrument of the body. But you are not called intemperate on that account, except in a purely metaphorical sense. Suppose I were to give out that Xenocrates was intemperate, without any qualification of the assertion, when I meant in my own mind only that he studied too late at night, don't you think that he might justly take an action against me for libel? We all know his extraordinary control over his physical impulses. Of course it is possible to be in the excess with regard to mental as well as bodily pleasures. A man may be so with regard to honour, and then he is condemned as 'ambitious'; he may be too fond of hearing and telling stories, and may waste his days on trifles, and then he is called a 'gossip'; he may grieve overmuch at the loss of property or friends, and we may say then that he is intemperate in grief: but this is merely a metaphor—in none of these cases is he called 'intemperate' in the strict sense of the term.

We may, therefore, confine ourselves to the bodily pleasures in the search for the sphere of temperance.

These, as I have said, must affect the soul through one of the five recognised inlets of sense. Let us draw a scheme, to make plain our method of procedure.



THEOPHRASTUS. May I ask why you have arranged the senses in this precise order?

ARISTOTLE. It would be enough to say 'for convenience': but as you would not be happy without a principle, I will give you one, if you will promise not to press it against me. You may say that the senses are here arranged in order of superiority.

THEOPHRASTUS. What is the criterion of superiority among the senses?

ARISTOTLE. For the nonce, we will say the distance at which they bring you into contact with the object. You can see the heavenly bodies, but you cannot hear the music of the spheres; you can hear a great deal further than you can smell; and you can smell further than you can taste or touch.

THEOPHRASTUS. But you can't taste any further off than you can touch, or indeed as far.

ARISTOTLE. There you go. I felt sure you would do it.

THEOPHRASTUS. Pardon me, master.

ARISTOTLE. Now with the pleasures of sight as such, and apart from their suggestions, temperance and intemperance have nothing to do. A man might take even a fatuous pleasure in painting or statuary, so as to neglect eating and drinking and the other offices of nature, in order

to gaze upon some work of art, without his being thereby called intemperate by any one who knew how to use words in their strict meaning.

The same thing holds true of the pleasures of hearing. A man may be unduly addicted to music, or he may neglect his business, for the sake of listening to plays, without being called intemperate.

EUDEMUS. I have been wondering why you should call these bodily pleasures at all. You seem to set down the pleasures derived from fine arts, such as painting, sculpture, music, acting and even poetry, under the head of bodily pleasures! Are they not as purely mental as the love of learning or honour?

ARISTOTLE. Sight and hearing are the two intellectual senses: so that the pleasures derived from them have more claim to be called mental than those of the three senses which yet remain to be discussed. But there is this important difference between a pleasure like music and a pleasure like honour. The idea of honour might be conveyed through one channel of sense as well as another, whereas if a man were to be deprived of hearing, he would be shut off for ever from the pleasure of music. Learning again requires some system of general signs, but that system may address itself to the ear, or to the eye, or even to the sense of touch—for it is conceivable that general ideas might be communicated through that: but the pleasure of painting, consisting as it does in the representation of colour and form on a flat surface, could not be conveyed through any medium but the eye. That is why I referred the pleasures of the fine arts to the head of bodily rather than of mental pleasures: but I grant that they form an intellectual class among bodily pleasures.

EUDEMUS. But poetry, at all events, can find access to the mind through the eye as well as through the ear; and this

would seem to exempt it from all suspicion of being a bodily pleasure.

ARISTOTLE. I think you should remember, Eudemus, that it was you who mentioned poetry, not I. The meaning of poetry can certainly be conveyed through the eye as well as through the ear, though the sensuous pleasure of sound which attaches to it cannot. But, interesting as this discussion is, I am afraid we must not pursue it further. We are all agreed, I think, that the pleasures which come through the eye and ear are not the proper sphere of temperance or intemperance, whether they are to be called bodily pleasures or not.

Next in order we come to the pleasures of smell. Temperance is concerned with these only indirectly, or by association, that is in so far as they suggest the objects of other desires. If a man exhibits an undue fondness for perfumes or the smell of dainty dishes, he may expose himself to a suspicion of intemperance.

THEOPHRASTUS. I can understand about the dainty dishes: but why 'perfumes'?

ARISTOTLE. The dream-interpreters tell us that if a Greek—it does not follow, I believe, in the case of a Persian—dreams of perfumes and dainty dishes, he is sure to lose money. I will leave it to yourself to trace the connexion of ideas.

But there are some pleasures of smell which resemble those of sight and hearing in implying no previous want, and in being the delights of nature in its normal state. These affect the mind agreeably in themselves, and not through the medium of memory or hope. Thus the fragrance of some fruits is delightful in itself, apart from any idea of eating them; and no one is called intemperate from enjoying the smell of flowers or frankincense.

NICOMACHUS. When I'm hungry, father, I must confess

that a good whiff of something cooking for dinner is most delicious, especially if there are onions in it.

ARISTOTLE. There, my son, you will find many people to agree with you. The satisfaction of a natural want is necessarily attended with pleasure, so that what suggests it is likely to be so too. Pleasure of this kind is as unavoidable as the pain or uneasiness which precedes it. But when you are not hungry a smell of dinner, I fancy, would be rather disagreeable to you than otherwise. Now the intemperate man delights in the smells of the kitchen at all times, because they suggest to him the objects of his desires.

THEOPHRASTUS. But I suppose that even he may be so sated with food that he cannot abide the very smell of it.

ARISTOTLE. That is true, but it is an extreme case.

To come back to our subject however. We have excluded the pleasures of smell from the strict sphere of temperance as entirely as those of sight and hearing. It is true that the pleasures of smell come under it indirectly or by association, but then any pleasures whatever may come under it in that way, even purely mental pleasures. If a man likes to be honoured, because he will get the tid-bits, instead of liking to get the tid-bits because they are a sign of honour, we shall hardly be doing him an injustice by concluding that there is a touch of intemperance about him.

We are now limited to the two senses of taste and touch, which are commonly regarded as being equally the sphere of intemperance.

It is a very significant fact that these are the only senses from which the lower animals derive any direct pleasure.

The scent of the hare is no pleasure to the hounds in itself, but only as being associated with food, which it puts them in the way of procuring. When the lion seems to rejoice in the lowing of the ox, it is not that the lowing

itself is music to his ears, but that it serves him as a sort of dinner-bell. And similarly, when he has seen or 'found horned hart or wild goat,' it is not that his eye is pleased with a fair form, but that his stomach is cheered with the prospect of a meal.

Since the sphere of intemperance then is commonly regarded as being just the two senses from which alone the lower animals derive any direct pleasure, it is no wonder that intemperance should be regarded as a degraded and beastly vice.

EUDEMUS. I am disappointed to hear you say that the lower animals take no direct pleasure in hearing. I thought it was generally agreed that dolphins were fond of music, and would follow a ship on board of which it was played. What is to become of the story of Arion?

ARISTOTLE. Dolphins will follow a ship on which there is no music. The story of Arion must be added to the list of miracles.

THEOPHRASTUS. I have always heard that cats were fond of valerian. As for dogs they seem to live for smell, though their tastes certainly are peculiar.

ARISTOTLE. Well, I can only give you my judgement for what it is worth. I have studied animals a good deal.

NICOMACHUS. Why were you so careful to say, father, that the sphere of temperance is commonly regarded as being the two senses of taste and touch? Do you not think yourself it is?

ARISTOTLE. I am inclined to doubt myself whether taste has much to do with it. Another of my observations upon the lower animals is that they are not susceptible to the pleasures of taste, the perception of which resides in the tip of the tongue and in the palate. Their pleasure in eating is derived from deglutition, which is a form of touch rather than of taste. The function of taste is the discernment

of flavours, as is done by those who try wines and season dishes. Now your true glutton seems to me not to trouble himself much about the discernment of flavours, but to be more eager for the satisfaction of swallowing: he likes the feel of the food as it goes down his throat.

THEOPHRASTUS. If that be so, one kind of food ought to suit him as well as another.

ARISTOTLE. Not so. All kinds do not feel alike to the throat, any more than all substances feel alike to the touch. The lower animals also have their preferences for one kind of food over another. You have some confirmation of what I am saying in the well-known prayer of the glutton, that his gullet might become longer than a crane's. He did not ask to have his tongue lengthened.

NICOMACHUS. Oh, I should like to know who he was, father.

ARISTOTLE. His name was Philoxenus, and his father's name was Eryxis, and, I believe, he belonged to Cythera. That is all I can tell you about him.

THEOPHRASTUS. But if people test wines and season dishes, it must be in order to give pleasure to other people, or themselves, when they come to drink the wines and eat the dishes; and some people, I suppose, will indulge more than they ought in these pleasures of taste. Would you not call such people intemperate?

ARISTOTLE. I know it is usual to do so. But I doubt whether they are called so in quite the strictest sense of the term.

If this view of mine be correct, we have now narrowed down the sphere of intemperance to the single sense of touch whether as displayed in eating or drinking or in what are called venereal pleasures. This sense of touch, which is the strict sphere of temperance and intemperance, is the most widespread of all the senses: it exists in us,

not as men but as animals. There is no living and moving creature so low in the scale of being but what is capable of this sense. To find our chief pleasure then in satisfactions which are common to us with all forms of animal life is to sink below the level of man. Hence the vice of intemperance is justly reprehensible.

THEOPHRASTUS. May we not say that all the senses are ultimately reducible to touch?

ARISTOTLE. That view was held by Empedocles and Democritus. I do not agree with it myself. But it would carry us too far away from the subject to discuss it now.

EUDEMUS. How different temperance looks after passing through your hands from the appearance it presents in Plato's Republic! There there is nothing too wide for it: it is the bond of union in the soul and in the state. You narrow it down to the regulation of the pleasures derived from a single sense, and that the lowest of all.

ARISTOTLE. I doubt whether I have narrowed it down sufficiently yet. For there are certain higher pleasures of touch with which temperance and intemperance have nothing to do. Would any one think of branding a man as intemperate if he took an excessive delight in a good rub down after a bath with the glow which attends upon it? Yet these are pleasures of touch. We must say then that the touch with which intemperance is concerned does not extend over the whole body, but is confined to certain parts.

We said at starting that the control of appetite was the special function of temperance. So now let us say something upon the subject of appetite.

To begin with, appetites may be divided into two classes. There are—

- (1) The common and natural;
- (2) the peculiar and acquired.

To the former class belongs the desire for food and drink

in general, which is necessary for the preservation of the species, and the desire for sexual intercourse, which is necessary for its propagation. That this last desire is natural to the young man in his prime may be believed even without Homer to testify to it. To the latter class belongs the liking for this or that particular kind of food, or the fancy for this or that particular person. In the former all men agree, in the latter they differ indefinitely. It is just as well that there should be these individual differences: for if the same thing were pleasant to every one, we should all be perpetually quarrelling. You need not suppose, however, that differences of individual taste are a mere matter of personal caprice. If one man likes fat and another lean, there is probably something in their physical constitution to account for this diversity. Take the man who eschews fat, and put him to live at the North Pole: before long you will find him develope a taste for blubber. Then again, though there is great variety in individual tastes, yet the variation takes place within limits. Every one likes almonds better than gravel.

Now in the common and natural desires error is only possible in the direction of excess, and this is of rare occurrence. It is seldom you meet with a man who is ready to eat or drink anything until he has had too much of it. This is to exceed the natural amount. As a rule the desire ceases when the previous want has been supplied. Such people as I have mentioned are called 'belly-mad,' because they exceed all bounds in filling their belly. But one must be very degraded to become like that. Other forms of intemperance that have names are 'lewdness,' 'drunkenness' and 'gluttony,' of which the two last belong rather to the peculiar desires. The desire for liquid in excess, simply as liquid, has not received a name. It is generally a symptom of disease.

It is in the regulation of the peculiar desires that temperance finds full scope for its exercise. Here many go wrong and in many ways. Those who are said to be fond of so and so may go wrong in taking delight in things in which they ought not, or in taking an inordinate delight or a wrong kind of delight in things in themselves innocent. You will find intemperance assuming all these forms of excess with regard to pleasures; and in all of them it is blameworthy.

NICOMACHUS. Did you not tell us, father, that intemperance was also concerned somehow with pains?

ARISTOTLE. I did, my son.

NICOMACHUS. I don't see how it is. It seems to me that the man who feels pain too much is a coward.

ARISTOTLE. Suppose you went out to dine, and that when some dish for which you had a particular liking was being handed round, the slave forgot to hand it to you. Do you think you would be pleased at that?

NICOMACHUS. I expect I should be in a boiling rage with him.

ARISTOTLE. The disappointment and pain you felt would be in proportion to the intensity of the pleasure anticipated. The pain would be in a way created by pleasure. Now the perfectly temperate man does not so set his soul upon any mere bodily pleasure that the loss of it should cause him any serious annoyance. That is the way in which temperance is concerned with pains. You see it is quite a different relation from that which courage bears to them. The courageous man is so called from enduring pains which are natural and inevitable; the temperate from not feeling factitious pains.

The intemperate man, on the other hand, has his appetite awakened by all things that are pleasant, or by those which are most so, and suffers himself to be led by appetite into

choosing these to the detriment of higher objects. The intensity of his enjoyments gives rise to equally intense pains, which are felt both when he misses the object on which his appetite is set, and while he feels the appetite: for appetite is always attended with pain, though it seems a sort of paradox that pleasure should give rise to pain.

The opposite character, who falls short of the temperate man in his enjoyment of pleasure, hardly ever occurs. Such insensibility indeed is hardly human. The lower animals, as I have said, distinguish between their foods, liking one kind more than another. Any one who found no pleasure in anything, and to whom one thing was just the same as another, could scarcely be called a man.

EUDEMUS. Do not the Cynics display this insensibility to pleasure?

ARISTOTLE. They affect it, but I doubt whether they feel it. They have a craze against pleasure, and push self-restraint to an extreme. Their position is that the common and natural desires alone are right, and that the individual and acquired are contrary to nature, which I have endeavoured to show you is not the case. The next extravagance, I suppose, will be to declare war even upon the natural desires. But I doubt whether a Cynic is less susceptible to pleasure than other men, though he refuses himself its enjoyment on principle. Indeed, I cannot help thinking that the extraordinary bitterness they display and their love of saying sharp things is due in some measure to envy against people who take life more easily than they do themselves.

THEOPHRASTUS. You appear, however, to think all the same that there are some people who are actually defective in a sense of pleasure, although they may be of very rare occurrence.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, there is such a thing to be met with as

a stolid or insensible man. I could even give you a description of his personal appearance.

THEOPHRASTUS. Nothing would interest me more.

ARISTOTLE. Well, you may observe that he has a good deal of flesh, creased and entangled, about the neck and legs, rounded hips and high shoulder-blades ; his forehead is large, round and fleshy ; he has a dull, green eye ; his shins are thick, fleshy and round, about the ankles ; his jaws are large and fleshy, his loins fleshy, his legs long, his neck thick, his face fleshy and rather long.

Between the intemperate and the stolid character the temperate man holds the just mean. Some of the things which cause the intemperate man the most delight rather serve to excite disgust in him ; if a thing is wrong, he feels no pleasure in it ; nor does he delight vehemently in any pleasures such as we are speaking of, nor feel the pain of appetite in their absence, except so far as they are necessary ; or, if the pain of deprival ever does go in his case beyond the natural desires, still it is felt moderately, not in undue measure or at an undue time or anything else of that sort : but such pleasures as are directly conducive to health and good bodily condition he will allow himself to seek in a moderate and proper way, and such other pleasures also as are not unwholesome or wrong or above his means. To seek pleasures that are any of these things would show that he valued pleasure above its worth. But this is exactly what the temperate man will not do, being guided in all things by reason.

NICOMACHUS. Which is the worse vice, father, intemperance or cowardice ?

ARISTOTLE. When two things are utterly bad, my son, it is difficult to compare their badness.

THEOPHRASTUS. You gave us to understand that courage is a harder virtue than temperance. So I suppose we may

infer that the absence of courage is more excusable than the absence of temperance.

ARISTOTLE. Well, if you look at any particular act of intemperance, I think you will see reason to pronounce that it is more voluntary, and therefore more reprehensible than any particular act of cowardice.

(1) To begin with, an intemperate act is prompted by the love of pleasure, but a cowardly act by the fear of pain. Now pleasure is a thing to pursue, and pain a thing to avoid; and pursuit implies more initial impulse than avoidance. The one is a luxury, but the other presents itself as a necessity.

(2) Again, the fear of pain is an overmastering impulse, which dislodges for a time the natural character of the man who feels it. The same can hardly be said of pleasure, and this makes us more inclined to blame the man who succumbs to it.

(3) Lastly, there are more frequent occasions in life for the practice of temperance, and such practice involves no risk, as that of courage does. If you wish, for instance, to practise temperance in wine-drinking, all you have to do is to put a bottle of peculiarly tempting wine within easy reach of you, and not take a little when you feel disposed to do so. But, if you want to practise courage, you have to face cold iron or something equally disagreeable.

EUDEMUS. I can see that a particular act of intemperance is voluntary, for indeed I have not forgotten the arguments with which you armed me to prove that an act which proceeds from our own appetite and inclination must be so. But when one looks at the state, the cause of voluntariness seems to be gone. A man is tempted by appetite into a particular act of intemperance: but there is no such thing as an appetite for intemperance in the abstract.

ARISTOTLE. The state, like all other states, is voluntary in its inception, involuntary in its issue.

THEOPHRASTUS. In the case of cowardice we seem to have an exception to the law of the greater voluntariness of acts than states. A particular act of cowardice, we have seen, is involuntary, because attended with pain owing to the presence of danger. But when one looks at the state, the cause of involuntariness seems to be gone; for there is no pain about the state. I suppose it would be true to say that there is such a thing as a cringing and cowardly disposition, which deliberately prefers submission to resistance, and determines to avoid pain at all costs. For this the same excuse cannot be pleaded as for the man who throws away his shield in a panic or commits some other unseemly act. So that the habit of cowardice as a whole seems to be more voluntary than the particular acts.

ARISTOTLE. Gently there, Theophrastus. You are running away with the car. We have *not* seen that a particular act of cowardice is involuntary, but only that it is more involuntary than a particular act of intemperance. My own position is that they are both voluntary, but you drove me between you into comparing the two. A cowardly act belongs to the class of mixed acts, and some of these we put down as admitting of excuse.

As to the habit being more voluntary than the particular acts, in so far as the habit results from the acts, it is, like other habits, less voluntary than they: but in so far as the craven disposition of which you speak is independent of acts and self-chosen, it may fairly be called more voluntary than a particular act of cowardice which is forced upon one by fear.

NICOMACHUS. I remember that when my nurse was angry with me she used to call me an 'intemperate brat.'

ARISTOTLE. She meant, or might have meant, that you had not been tempered or chastened as you ought to have been. We apply the same term to the unruliness of children and to a disorderly state of appetite in a man.

NICOMACHUS. Which do you consider to be the literal and which the metaphorical meaning, father?

ARISTOTLE. That does not matter much to our present purpose. But I suppose the one which comes later in time is derived from the earlier. Anyhow, the metaphor is not at all a bad one. For appetite and the child resemble each other in more points than one. Both have a hankering after pleasure; both have a great capacity for growth; both require to be kept under strict control. If the impulse to pleasure be not checked in time, there is no knowing where it may lead one: for in itself it is insatiable, and is ready to attack the fool from every quarter. You gratify one desire, and in so doing you wake up a whole family of sleeping desires, which may ultimately become so strong as to dethrone reason altogether. You see then how necessary it is that one's appetites should be moderate and few and in no way opposed to reason. When they are in this state we may call them obedient and attempered. In the temperate man the principle of appetite lives in obedience to reason just as the child ought to live in obedience to its tutor. His appetites never ask for what reason cannot sanction; never clamour for indulgence in a wrong way or at a wrong time. For the whole nature of the man is in harmony with itself, and desire and reason conspire to the one end—the attainment of the morally beautiful. Let so much then suffice for us to have said about temperance.

LECTURE XXII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, IV. 1]

LIBERALITY—ITS SPHERE AND DEFINITION

To-DAY we are going to speak about liberality.

As to its sphere, we may say that it is the mean with respect to property. For where does the liberal man find his praise? Not in war, like the brave man; not in the control of his appetites, like the temperate man; not in the fairness of his decisions, like the just man; but with regard to the giving and taking of property, and more with regard to the giving.

When I speak of 'property,' you must understand me to mean 'commodities' or 'wealth.' Better still, let me define what I mean, and then there will be no chance of mistake. I mean 'everything the value of which is measured in money.' To say that a thing has a value in money is to say that it has a value in exchange, for money is the medium of exchange. There are things, like air and sunshine, which have the utmost value in use, but which are not wealth, because they have no value in exchange. Fortunately no one can make property of them.

The excess and defect in the same sphere are called respectively prodigality and illiberality. The latter is a

wide term including, as we shall see, very different species, but its sense is always one and the same. It signifies an undue desire for wealth. The former term is ambiguous. For when we talk of a 'prodigal,' we sometimes mean merely one who wastes his substance, and sometimes one who wastes his substance on riotous living. It is this second use of the term that makes the prodigal seem such a bad character, for it implies a complication of vices. But the word properly signifies a man who has one definite vice, that of destroying his substance. The prodigal, in fact, is a kind of suicide. For to destroy one's substance is to destroy oneself, since life is not possible without the means of living. That is why we call a man's wealth his 'means. Understand me then to use the term prodigal in the more simple and less condemnatory sense.

People in general do not seem inclined to think that it is the liberal man who makes the best use of wealth. And yet this conclusion may be arrived at by a very slight effort of reasoning.

Whatever has a use may be used well or ill.

Wealth has a use.

∴ Wealth may be used well or ill.

Now who is the man who will use it well?

Everything will be used best by the man who has the virtue connected with that thing.

∴ Wealth will be used best by the man who has the virtue connected with wealth.

And this is the liberal man.

Our point therefore is proved, that it is the liberal man who makes the best use of wealth.

But understand that by the use of wealth we mean the spending and giving; the receiving and keeping come rather under the head of getting and having. Wherefore it is more the part of the liberal man to give to the right

persons than to receive from the right sources and to refrain from receiving from wrong ones. For virtue generally is something active rather than passive, and something positive rather than negative. To do good belongs to it more than to receive good, and to perform right actions rather than to refrain from wrong ones. Now it is clear that doing good and acting rightly are attendant upon giving, whereas the utmost that is attendant upon receiving is the being done good to or the refraining from wrong action. Again, thanks are paid to him who gives, not to him who abstains from taking ; and the same holds true of praise. Also it is easier not to take than to give : for men are less disposed to spend their own substance than to refrain from taking what belongs to another. For all these reasons, it is the active side of the virtue that is prominent and merits praise. So that it is those who give whom you find called liberal. Those who refrain from taking are not praised on this score : their praise, if any, belongs to justice. But those who take are not praised at all.

EUDEMUS. I suppose if a man refrained from taking what he was justly entitled to, he would deserve to be called liberal ?

ARISTOTLE. Yes, that comes to the same thing as giving, though it is perhaps a little easier, as the loss is less apparent to the imagination.

There is yet another reason, which I was about to mention, for the superiority of the active over the merely passive side of liberality. Though all virtue is worthy of our love, yet this particular virtue is perhaps the one which most attracts it. Who is loved so much as the liberal man ? But it is not by not taking that he wins this love, but by being forward to give.

THEOPHRASTUS. I suspect the reason why we are so

fond of the liberal man is, because we think that some of the benefits he is slapping about may chance to come our way.

ARISTOTLE. No doubt utility is at the bottom of the feeling. But I must deprecate the expression which you have just employed. The liberal man does not 'slap' his benefits 'about.' If he did, he would not be liberal. All virtuous acts are right and done for right's sake. To be liberal then a man must give from the motive of right and in the correct way, being careful to choose the proper persons, the proper amount, the proper time, and so on. Furthermore, the act of giving must cause him pleasure or, at all events, not cause him pain: for a virtuous act is either positively pleasurable or at the least free from pain; it is never actually painful.

THEOPHRASTUS. Was it not admitted that an act of courage might be painful to the brave man?

ARISTOTLE. As regards the means only, not the end. But courage stands on quite a different footing from liberality. Courage is painful in so far as the things which it teaches one to bear cheerfully are painful by nature. But the pain which is caused by giving, when to give is right and noble, arises merely from an undue love of wealth. It is a proof that the liberal man's state of mind is not yet attained, if one prefers one's property to a right act. You must therefore find some other name than 'liberal' for the man who gives grudgingly and of necessity, putting force upon himself in order to do the right act. You must also find some other name for the man who gives to the wrong persons, and so on, or not from the motive of right. A man who is not really liberal will often be found to act liberally from the motive of ambition.

We have laid stress upon the active side of liberality, as illustrating the active nature of virtue generally. But

the passive side is, of course, a necessary condition. The liberal man will not take from a wrong source. To take in this way would manifestly indicate an undue desire for wealth. Nor is one who is liberal likely to ask for things: for it is not the part of one who confers benefits to let himself be laid under an obligation. But while he avoids taking from the wrong sources, he will not scruple to take from the right ones, as, for instance, from his own property.

There is, of course, nothing noble about this, but still without it the noble cannot be. If he were to neglect his private property, he would cut himself off from the means of performing his right and generous acts. The same anxiety to give where and when it is really right to give disinclines the liberal man to give to chance-comers. An inattentive observer might sometimes deem him parsimonious. But let the liberal man be sure of his ground, let him be convinced that the right occasion has come, and he will give so unstintedly as to leave himself in lack: for unselfishness is the very essence of liberality.

This interior nature of the virtue shows that liberality is no mere question of quantity. There may be more unselfishness displayed in parting with an obol than in parting with a talent. It depends upon the proportion which the gift bears to the amount of one's substance. The liberality of a gift then does not depend upon the amount given, but upon the state of mind of the giver.

THEOPHRASTUS. I suppose it is easier for some people to attain the requisite state of mind than for others. At all events I have noticed that those who have inherited wealth are, as a rule, more liberal than those who have acquired it.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, the virtue, or the appearance of it, is made easier for the inheritors of wealth, for they have never experienced want. And then again those who have

made their own money set a double value upon it. They value it, like other people, for its use, but they also love it as their own production, as a parent loves his child or a poet his poem. When then you see a man making a good use of a fortune which he has spent pains in acquiring, you may be sure that his liberality proceeds from a sense of right, and not from mere confidence and inability to imagine himself reduced to poverty.

THEOPHRASTRUS. I am afraid that is a sight you seldom see. They say Fortune is blind: but I have a notion that she only shams blindness, and really peeps from behind her bandages with the spiteful intention of putting wealth into the hands of the least worthy.

ARISTOTLE. Fortune has enough abuse to bear already without saddling her with things for which she really is not responsible. When you can find a definite cause for a thing, there is no longer any reason for ascribing it to fortune.

THEOPHRASTRUS. And what definite cause is there for the most worthy being the least wealthy?

ARISTOTLE. Why, the general rule that a man is not likely to have a thing unless he takes pains to have it. Now wealth is not the thing on which the virtuous man sets his affections and concentrates his efforts. The goods of the soul belong to an altogether higher class than external goods. The man who chooses them chooses the better part. But if he deliberately prefers the higher goods, he cannot complain of fortune for not imparting to him the lower. Fortune is really blind and absolutely indifferent to merit. The reason why you think she favours the unworthy is that riches, to a great extent, do not depend on Fortune, but belong to those who take most pains to acquire them. You might reasonably suspect Fortune of partiality if you found that the good, who are the most indifferent to wealth, were possessed of it in equal measure with those

who scramble for it. The unjust man has a natural advantage over the just man in amassing wealth, for he neglects no source of acquisition whether right or wrong, whereas the just man avails himself only of right sources. Instead therefore of complaining that those who have the higher goods are not given the lower into the bargain, which I cannot help thinking indicative of a grab-all disposition, you ought rather to rejoice that there are consolation-prizes for those who are left behind in the race of virtue.

If these remarks are true of virtue generally, they apply in a special degree to the particular virtue which we are now considering. That the liberal are seldom rich is a natural consequence of the fact that they prefer giving to taking or keeping. One might as well expect a cistern not to get empty, out of which the water was flowing at one end without flowing in at the other.

THEOPHRASTUS. When the liberal man's cistern has run dry, I doubt if he will find others as ready to replenish it as he was to fill theirs.

ARISTOTLE. A man's liberality should be confined to his overflow. It is a mistake to deprive oneself of the necessaries of life. But to the wise many things are superfluities which to others appear necessities. When Socrates passed through a richly-stocked bazaar, he congratulated himself by thinking 'How many things there are of which I have no need !' The liberal man, being guided by reason, will be careful to stop short of leaving himself destitute. He is, as we have intimated, a man who spends in proportion to his means and on proper objects. This definition does not apply to a man who spends in a disorderly way or to one who is too indolent or irrational to brook the trouble of calculation. Either of these characters is a prodigal.

As it is characteristic of the prodigal to exceed his means, we seldom call princes prodigal, because it is not easy for them to exceed the amount of their possessions even by such gifts and expenses as they indulge in.

To sum up then all that we have been saying. Liberality being a mean state with regard to the giving and taking of money, the liberal man will give and spend on proper objects and a proper amount, alike in small things and in great, and he will do it too with pleasure; also he will take from the proper sources and the proper amount. For the virtue, as we have said, is a mean with respect to both giving and taking, so that he will do both in the way he ought. Virtuous giving is naturally attended by virtuous taking, whereas any other kind of taking is incompatible with it. Now states of mind which are attendant upon one another are found together in the same person, whereas those which are incompatible clearly are not.

THEOPHRASTUS. With so many impostors going about, I suppose the liberal man can't be expected always to hit upon the proper objects whereon to exercise his virtue?

ARISTOTLE. He will make mistakes of course sometimes, and will be pained when he does, but moderately and as he ought. We are agreed already that moral virtue is concerned with feeling pleasure and pain at the right things and in the right way.

NICOMACHUS. I should think the liberal man would be a very good person to go into partnership with, father?

ARISTOTLE. Yes, you can impose upon him, if you have a mind to, for he does not set store upon property, and is more vexed with himself if he has failed to spend money where he ought, than pained if he has chanced to spend it where he ought not. I am afraid that a shrewd man of the world, like Simonides, would have a poor opinion of the liberal man.

NICOMACHUS. I never imagined that a great poet like Simonides could have answered to your description of him, father?

ARISTOTLE. Many poets, my son, are not in the least like the ideas that people have of them. Simonides had an immense respect for riches. When Hiero's wife asked him whether it was better to be wealthy or to be wise, he replied, 'to be wealthy; for I have often seen the wise spending their time at the doors of the wealthy, but not the wealthy at the doors of the wise.'

THEOPHRASTUS. I should say that that is because the wise man knows what he wants, whereas the rich man is too great a fool to do so.

ARISTOTLE. There's something in that. But I was going to tell you another anecdote about Simonides, which may perhaps disappoint Nicomachus. A man who had won the prize in a mule-race wanted Simonides to celebrate his exploit. So long as the inducement he offered was inadequate Simonides disdained to sing in praise of mules, but when the victor made it worth his while he composed the ode beginning—

'Hail, ye daughters of storm-footed steeds.'

THEOPHRASTUS. I suppose he thought it judicious to suppress the fact that they were also daughters of donkeys?

ARISTOTLE. It might not have suited his purpose so well. But we have managed to stray from the point. I was speaking of the pain the liberal man feels when he has missed a proper occasion for generosity or hit upon an improper one. In these respects the prodigal man goes quite astray. He neither feels pleasure and pain at the right things nor in the right way. But this will be more manifest as we go on. For, as we have said enough about the mean, it is now time that we should turn our attention

to the extremes. These are, as I have told you, prodigality and illiberality ; and their sphere, like that of liberality, extends to the two things, giving and taking : for spending we may set down under the head of giving. Now prodigality is in excess in giving and in abstaining from taking, but in defect in taking, whereas illiberality is in defect in giving and in excess in taking, but always in small matters.

EUDEMUS. May I ask why you add that last qualification ?

ARISTOTLE. Because, if a tyrant were to possess himself of the whole state, although he took a wrong amount and in a wrong way and so on, you would hardly call his act 'illiberal,' but would want some bigger word to express your detestation of his conduct.

The two sides of prodigality are, from the nature of the case, not often found in conjunction ; since it is not easy to give to every one, if you don't take from anywhere. When private persons make a practice of giving, their property quickly fails them. Then they get called 'prodigal,' though, while they were giving, they were probably called 'generous' by the recipients of their bounty.

THEOPHRASTUS. You don't seem to regard the prodigal as being such a bad character after all ?

ARISTOTLE. Not if you mean the prodigal pure and simple. I think he is a good deal better than the illiberal man.

THEOPHRASTUS. I have heard the opposite view strongly maintained.

ARISTOTLE. I don't see how it can be. The prodigal has the attributes of the liberal man in the rough : he is inclined to give and, while undepraved, not inclined to take. His fault is that he does not give wisely and well. Let him be rightly trained, and he becomes liberal, since

his fault is rather of the head than of the heart. It is no sign of a vicious or ignoble disposition to be in the excess in giving and not taking, but rather of a fool.

Then again, even without direction from others, prodigality admits of being cured either by age or by experience of distress.

Lastly, the prodigal does good to many persons, while the illiberal does good to no one, not even, if he be a miser, to himself.

THEOPHRASTUS. That is just the point I have heard controverted. Some people maintain that the miserly man does more good to society than the spendthrift.

ARISTOTLE. How can that be ?

THEOPHRASTUS. Because saving leads to investment, and investment to the production of wealth ; whereas the spendthrift's property is frittered away, and generally goes to enrich exactly the wrong persons.

ARISTOTLE. The miser I was thinking of only invests his money in a hole in the ground. But there is something in what you say, if the times are secure enough to admit of investment.

THEOPHRASTUS. Do you agree then with the view that I have mentioned ? I do not pretend that it is my own.

ARISTOTLE. If I regarded society as a joint-stock company for the production of wealth, I certainly would agree with it. But I look upon a state as having different and higher ends in view. While quite willing to admit then that the miser, under certain conditions, confers more material benefit upon society than the prodigal, I am by no means prepared to grant that the question is thereby settled in favour of the ethical superiority of the miser. For a slight increase in the spirit which leads to the communication of wealth is of more real value to society than a large increase of wealth itself. Now if you judge the two

characters from this standpoint, which of them comes off the better? As I said before, you can make a liberal man out of a prodigal, but you will never make one out of a miser. Let us grant to the miser greater foresight and self-restraint, though his self-restraint is really only a diseased passion for accumulation, yet is there any one who does not like the man who is too free with his money better than the man who is too close with it?

THEOPHRASTUS. You know that I suggested a reason for that.

ARISTOTLE. I do not deny its force. But, apart from such bias to the judgement, I think that there is a justification for the general feeling. Let us try to penetrate into the secret springs from which the two tendencies proceed. Penuriousness is, I suppose, the outcome of selfishness and fear; prodigality of confidence and goodwill, or, at the worst, of vanity and ostentation, which imply a desire for the approbation of others. Heedless extravagance may undoubtedly lead to a great deal of mischief. Still, I think there is no question but that it is the index of a more social temperament than its opposite defect. If you really agree with me, Theophrastus, in thinking that to do good is better than to receive it, I do not think you will attach weight to the arguments of those who would extol the man who does not attempt to do good over him who attempts it in an ill-directed way.

THEOPHRASTUS. If he does attempt it. But it seems to me that the prodigal is no less selfish than the miser, though in a different way.

ARISTOTLE. Now, I think, you are shifting ground. I guarded my statement from the first by talking of 'the prodigal pure and simple.' For the prodigal in the complex sense I have nothing to say. He is a very bad character, and suffers, as I have said, from a complication of vices.

He not only wastes his substance, but he wastes it on riotous living ; and, having a lust to spend, and with no rule of right to guide him, he becomes equally anxious to take, no matter from what quarter. He is therefore guilty of three vices—of prodigality, in that he spends recklessly ; of intemperance, in that he spends on personal luxury ; and of illiberality, in that he takes from wrong sources. Here we have one of those instances of extremes meeting, to which Eudemus drew our attention, when the man who begins by being prodigal ends by being illiberal as well. And this is too often the natural destiny of the prodigal pure and simple, if left untutored. For, as he is of a disposition to spend readily, he will spend, among other things, on the gratification of his personal desires. But as desire grows by being gratified, his appetites will be getting stronger as his property gets less. So that in the end he will be driven into taking from wrong sources, in order to indulge his appetites. But do not let us mix up vices simply because they are often found together. The worst feature about this character is his intemperance, not his prodigality. It is quite possible for a man to have strict control over all his appetites, and to suffer simply from incontinence of cash. The man who has this one definite vice is, I maintain, a much better character than the miser.

THEOPHRASTUS. I admit that I was thinking of the prodigal in the complex sense when I spoke of the prodigal being as selfish as the miser. But now I will maintain the same thing of the prodigal pure and simple.

ARISTOTLE. How can you call a man selfish whose only fault is that he is too willing to give and too unwilling to take ?

THEOPHRASTUS. Because he only does it to gratify his own inclination. Selfishness in him happens to assume the form of a spurious and heedless benevolence.

ARISTOTLE. Then we must settle what we mean by selfishness. You seem to be saying that all acts whatever are selfish. For certainly whenever a man does anything, he does it to gratify his own inclination. But it is usual to call him selfish or otherwise according to what that inclination is. I should define selfishness as the preference of oneself to others as regards external goods. Would you say that the prodigal displays this preference?

THEOPHRASTUS. Not as regards wealth, but he may as regards honour. You have told us that honour is as much an external good as wealth, and that the prodigal's spring of action may be simply vanity and ostentation.

ARISTOTLE. You have certainly made a point there, Theophrastus, but I do not feel that I am driven to abandon my preference for the prodigal. For though his action may be, and I daresay often is, prompted by vanity, it may also be prompted by goodwill. But, even if you put the worst construction on the conduct of the prodigal, I should still prefer him to the miser, since honour, which he covets, is a higher form of good than wealth. Moreover, a rivalry for honour is, on the whole, much more beneficial to society than a scramble for wealth.

Now look at illiberality, and see how little there is to be said for it.

In its form of miserliness, it is the fault of a weak and timid nature. A man of bolder spirit expects easily to be able to supply his own wants, and so does not see why he should not stretch out his hand to help his fellows. But the miser is afraid to help another for fear he should come to want himself. This is why the vice is so incurable. For old age and every form of incapacity tends only to intensify it: so that we are met by the melancholy spectacle, that the less a man has of life's journey before him the more eager he is to supply provisions for it. To find the reason of

this, we must go to the bottom of things. Men love life inordinately, and therefore they love inordinately the means of living.

The last consideration shows us why illiberality is a vice more inherent in the nature of man than prodigality. The majority of men derive far more pleasure from wealth (which symbolizes life) than they do from liberality.

Furthermore illiberality is a vice of wide extent and which assumes many shapes. Hitherto we have looked at it only under the form of miserliness. But we must not forget that this is to confine it to half its sphere. It embraces excess in taking as well as defect in giving. The former is the phase under which it generally presents itself in robuster natures, and here it runs into the wildest injustice. Sometimes the two sides of the vice are united in one person; and then you have the avaricious and unscrupulous man, who covets the goods of others, and takes them when he can, at the same time that he is tenacious of his own. Sometimes, again, the two sides are separate, and you find one set of men who are in the excess in taking and another who are in the defect in giving. The people who go under the names of 'thrifty,' 'close-fisted,' 'niggards,' are all in the defect in giving, but they do not attempt to possess themselves of their neighbours' goods. In some this restraint is due to conscientiousness—for you may have a man who would not give away a farthing that belonged to himself, but who would be just as unlikely to take a farthing that belonged to another. The 'cheeseparer' illustrates the kind of man I mean; he would assure you that the motive for his parsimony was to avoid his ever being driven into doing wrong through want. Others, however, are kept honest simply through fear. They think that robbery is a game that two can play at, and that they

themselves might come off second best at it, if they began : so they are content neither to take nor give.

The other set of men, who are in the excess in taking, are ready to take anything from anywhere. They will ply mean trades, keep brothels, and so on, and lend small sums of money at a high rate of interest.

THEOPHRASTUS. I think a good many citizens of Athens, who pass for respectable men, would complain of you for the company in which you are putting them.

ARISTOTLE. I cannot help that. The usurer has been a hateful character since the world began, because, instead of helping his fellow-man in his distress, he takes advantage of it to make profit for himself. He is characterized by the same passion as the rest, which is a sordid love of gain. For they are all ready to endure reproach for the sake of gain, and that too a small gain.

THEOPHRASTUS. I suppose you mean that, when the same thing is practised on a large scale, the reproach is apt to pass into admiration.

ARISTOTLE. Yes : men are such worshippers of power that they forget that the lust for gain which leads to sacking cities and plundering temples is only a magnified form of the same spirit which would annex your pocket-handkerchief. If they condemn these acts at all, it is by words befitting their dignity, such as 'wickedness,' 'impiety,' and 'injustice.'

The gambler however, the highwayman, and the brigand —these every one would describe as illiberal, since they are all of them animated by a base desire for gain.

NICOMACHUS. I don't see why the gambler should be described as illiberal, father, if he risks his money fairly against yours.

ARISTOTLE. Because he is ready to take from his friends, to whom he ought rather to give.

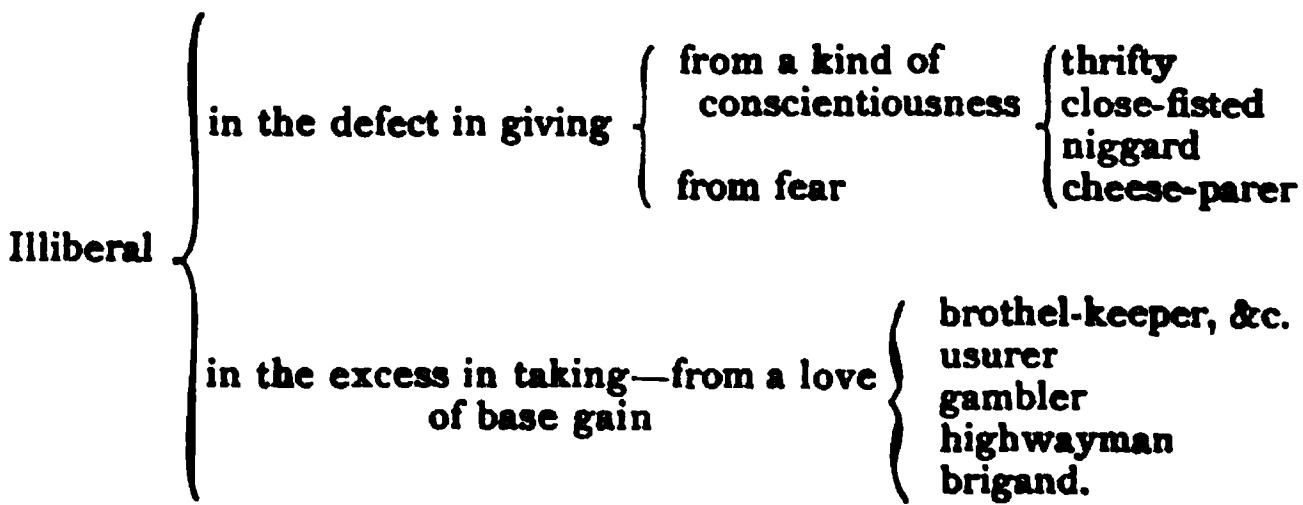
NICOMACHUS. But suppose he only plays at a public table

ARISTOTLE. He will still be taking from his friends, for all fellow-countrymen are, or should be, friends. Gambling is a form of civil war. It is as though men were to cease to till the ground, and trust to getting hold of their neighbours' crops. It is easy to see that this, if practised on a large scale, would be disastrous to a nation.

As for the other characters whom I mentioned—the highwayman and the brigand—they display their base love of gain in being willing to face not only disgrace but danger too in its pursuit.

On the whole, then, we may fairly conclude that illiberality is rightly regarded as being more opposed to liberality than prodigality is. It is a worse vice in itself than the other, and is also one to which men are more prone.

Let so much then suffice for liberality and its contrary vices. But perhaps before you go I had better draw you a scheme of the various forms of illiberality which I have been mentioning.



LECTURE XXIII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, IV. 2]

MAGNIFICENCE—ITS SPHERE AND DEFINITION

THE treatment of magnificence forms a natural sequel to that of liberality, since the two have to some extent the same sphere, both virtues being concerned with wealth. The sphere of magnificence however is more restricted than that of liberality. You can display liberality in not taking as well as in giving, whereas there can be no magnificence apart from actual outlay. The sphere of magnificence then is confined to the outlay of money. But herein it surpasses liberality in amount: so that we may say that its sphere is the outlay of money on a large scale. This however would not by itself be enough to distinguish it. We have to add a further qualification. It would be quite possible for two men to spend the same amount on the same kind of object, and yet for one of them to display the utmost magnificence, and the other none at all. How can that be, Nicomachus?

NICOMACHUS. One of them might be actuated by a wrong motive, say, to display his wealth.

ARISTOTLE. We will suppose that they are both actuated by the motive of right, which is essential to virtue of any kind. Now how can it be?

NICOMACHUS. Perhaps one of them might give from less means than the other.

ARISTOTLE. That would show that he was more liberal, but he might still be less magnificent than the other. Here is my problem. Given two men of equal means, both actuated by the motive of right, who spend the same amount on the same kind of object, and yet one of whom displays the utmost magnificence and the other none at all—How can that be?

NICOMACHUS. It is plain that there must be a difference in the way they do it. Perhaps one has good taste and the other not.

ARISTOTLE. That is just it. The one may fail in magnificence for want of taste and knowledge. There is an aesthetic and intellectual element in magnificence, whereby it is distinguished from mere liberality, not only in degree but in kind. This is the further qualification of which we were in search. And now, by determining the exact sphere of magnificence, we have arrived at a definition of the virtue itself. We may say that it is *the state of mind which leads to outlay on a large scale in good taste*.

The largeness of scale and necessity for artistic effect are both implied in the very name. You must not therefore think of magnificence as merely a bigger kind of liberality. For it differs from the other virtue in three ways—

- (1) in sphere, being confined to expenditure ;
- (2) in degree, being on a larger scale ;
- (3) in kind, as it involves an element of good taste.

The difference in sphere has been already loosely indicated. If pressed, it resolves itself into a discussion of the virtue generally.

Neither can the difference in degree be treated with precision by itself. We can only roughly say that magnificence is that species of liberality which deals with large

matters. When Homer makes Odysseus say 'To the wayfarer oft would I give,' we may safely set that down under the head of liberality, not of magnificence. It is therefore on the difference in kind that we must fix our chief attention. For the largeness of scale is, of course, relative or proportional. Thus there is not the same expense required for a trierarch as for the leader of a sacred embassy. Mere amount of expenditure indeed is more likely to be indicative of the vice of ostentation than of the virtue of magnificence. All depends upon the good taste or propriety which directs it. This propriety has regard to the person himself, that is, the donor, to the occasion, and to the object. We will speak of these in their order; but I wish first to make a few general remarks about the virtue.

The defect of magnificence is called 'shabbiness'; the excess 'ostentation,' 'vulgarity,' or 'bad taste.' The excess is brought about, not by surpassing the magnificent man in amount spent on proper objects, but by making a show on improper occasions and in an improper way. But we will speak of the vices after we have discussed the virtue.

The distinguishing feature of the magnificent man is his artistic instinct. He is able to discern the proper thing to do, and to spend large sums of money in a tasteful way. It is this which leads us to give the name that we do to the state. For every state or habit has its character fixed by the acts (as we said in the beginning) and by the objects with which it is concerned. Therefore the acts must be great and becoming, since they tend to fix a habit of great and becoming expenditure. Just the same two attributes of grandeur and beauty will attach to the results of the magnificent man's expenditure: for so only will the greatness of the expense be befitting to the result. The work then must be worthy of the expense, and the expense of the work, or even in excess of it. Of course the animating

motive in all that the magnificent man does must be to realise the beautiful: for without this there is no virtue.

What he does too he will do with pleasure and with a lavish hand; for minute calculation is a sign of shabbiness.

His chief consideration will be how to produce the most beautiful and becoming result, not 'How much will it cost?' or 'How may it be done cheapest?'

We have already said vaguely that magnificence is that species of liberality which deals with large matters, but this is not enough, since the difference between the two states is not one merely of degree, but of kind. Even within his own sphere the liberal man will be surpassed by the magnificent in a matter of outlay. Not that the liberal man will not spend the right amount in the right way, but simply because, if he be liberal and nothing more, he will lack the taste and knowledge which enable the magnificent man to produce a more striking effect at the same cost.

The result of the magnificent man's expenditure is of the nature of a work of art, and he himself is a kind of artist. Now grandeur and beauty, as I said before, are the characteristic merits of a work of art. They serve to impress the imagination, and this is just what the magnificent does. The liberal man may give you a thing which costs him as much as the result of his activity costs the magnificent man, but it will be a chattel, not a work of art. The merit of a chattel is value, not size or beauty—indeed, the smaller the better: gold and jewels compress the greatest value into the smallest bulk.

These were the general remarks which I had to make. Let us now speak of propriety as regards the person, the occasion, and the object.

And first, of the person.

Magnificence is not a virtue which, like liberality, is open

to rich and poor alike. A beggar may be liberal with his last crust, but he has no scope for magnificence. Magnificence then is a rich man's virtue, as wealth is an indispensable condition of it. The poor man who attempts it is simply a fool. He lacks the means of success and is violating all fitness by the attempt, which is not the part of virtue.

But wealth is not the only condition. You want also men of birth, reputation, and dignity, and generally men whose antecedents constitute a claim upon them for its exercise. These things carry with them grandeur and dignity ; and propriety demands that there should be the same attributes about the worker as there are about his work. When Themistocles in the days of his obscurity tried to rival Cimon at Olympia in the splendour of his entertainments, tents, and paraphernalia generally, he contrived merely to get himself set down as a braggart by the public opinion which approved of the same thing in the scion of a noble house.

Next, of the occasion.

The most fitting occasions for the display of this virtue are those of public interest. We have not set it down under the head of 'civic virtues,' but it also is worthy of the name, since public spirit enters largely into it. A man has scope for its display when he is acting as choregus, trierarch, or phylarch, still more if it should come in his way to give a banquet to the whole state.

In private life the virtue is best exercised on striking occasions such as are not likely to recur, for instance, a wedding ; also in the case of things which, though done by private persons, have an interest for the public or for men of reputation. Thus magnificence is peculiarly in place with regard to the reception or dismissal of distinguished strangers, and in giving or returning them presents.

Such gifts as these have a resemblance to votive offerings. There is an impersonal element about them, as they are bestowed for the credit of the state.

Lastly, of the object.

We have already trenched on this ground in speaking of the occasion, for the two are not easily separable. But we may say that the most proper objects of all on which to exercise the virtue are those connected with divine worship, such as votive offerings, the building of temples, and sacrifices. For religion is essentially an affair of the state, and a matter, not of personal but of general interest. When a stranger visits a city, it is the temples chiefly that attract his attention. A tomb also may be a fitting object for the display of magnificence, though not of course on the same scale as a temple. Propriety is the very essence of the virtue. Among things not connected with religion, some public work like a bridge, which strikes the eye and impresses the imagination, is the sort of object which the magnificent man would choose for his expenditure. A permanent object like this is more appropriate than a transient one ; for since the beauty lasts longer, it may be said to be greater.

Though the magnificent man does not spend money on personal gratification, but rather on public objects, yet this will not prevent his dress being handsome, as the expression of his love of the beautiful, nor his house, which is a kind of extension of dress. Ornamentation, we may remark, is never purely irrelevant ; it is rather the necessary carried into superfluity. Now clothing and shelter are necessities : but in the magnificent man they will become a source of beauty.

This love of beauty, which is inseparable from the magnificent man, will accompany him even into small matters, which are less obviously the sphere of the virtue.

For anything can be magnificent by being great in its own kind, and though the most magnificent are those which are great in a great kind, yet you may have magnificence apart from these. You may also have a result which is great in its own kind, even where the expense, considered absolutely, is not great. The most beautiful ball or bottle that is to be had is magnificent as a present to a child, though the price even of the most costly is something small and paltry. We may therefore say that it is the part of the magnificent man, whatever he does, to do it magnificently, so that his work cannot be surpassed within its own kind and is worthy of what he has spent on it.

Such then is the magnificent man.

As his work cannot be surpassed within the limits of propriety, it is evident that the man who surpasses him must violate propriety. And this is just what the ostentatious or vulgarly profuse man does, spending a great deal on occasions that do not call for it, and making a display in bad taste. When it comes to his turn to entertain some modest club of 'good fellows,' he will give them a feast fit for a wedding-banquet, forgetting, or wilfully ignoring, the fact that his fellow-members may be mortified at seeing a display which they could not rival, if they would. Or perhaps he is choregus to a company of comedians, and then he will have the entrance to the stage hung with purple, instead of with the sheepskins which are usual in comedy. And all this he will do, not from any motive of right or love of the beautiful, but simply to exhibit his wealth, and under the idea that he is attracting admiration by spending a great deal where he ought to spend little, while all the time he is neglecting the occasions that really call for expenditure.

The shabby man, on the other hand, will be in the defect in everything. If he is giving a wedding-banquet

for an only son, he will lay out such a feast as the other ought to have provided for his dinner-club. Even where he has gone to the greatest expense, he will spoil the effect by some petty meanness. He will do nothing readily, but put it off as long as he can, always considering how he can spend least over it. And when he does spend, he will grumble over it, and imagine that he is doing everything on a greater scale than is necessary.

These two states then that I have been describing, namely, shabbiness and vulgar profusion, are vices. They do not however incur reproach, because they do no harm to one's neighbour, and their unseemliness is of a kind to provoke ridicule rather than reproach.

NICOMACHUS. I don't quite see, father, wherein the shabby man differs from the illiberal man, in so far, I mean, as the vice of the latter consists in a reluctance to give or spend.

ARISTOTLE. Why just in this, that the shabby man does spend. Shabbiness can only be displayed in spending, as the vices opposed to magnificence must have the same sphere as magnificence itself. But the shabby man spoils the effect of his spending by underdoing it, wherein he is opposed to the vulgarly profuse man, and also by the want of taste which is common to him with the other.

EUDEMUS. Is magnificence necessarily confined to the spending of money? I have heard people talk of magnificence displaying itself in the features or in the gait. This would seem to point to some other use of the term.

ARISTOTLE. A word generally has transferred or metaphorical uses. But the literal meaning of magnificence is, I think, what I have given to it.

THEOPHRASTUS. You said that magnificence was not a virtue which was open to all. Does not this seem to show that it is not a virtue at all?

ARISTOTLE. I do not think so. A virtue may require certain conditions under which it is to be exercised. How could you be liberal, if you were living alone?

THEOPHRASTUS. But liberality is open to all members of society, while magnificence is confined to a very few.

ARISTOTLE. I agree with you in thinking this a proof that it is not a virtue on a level with the rest. The extent to which magnificence is a virtue may be measured by the extent to which the opposite states are vices.

THEOPHRASTUS. It seems to me to be only liberality over again with a dash of art thrown in. Is it really a moral virtue at all?

ARISTOTLE. So far as the element of liberality goes, it is certainly a moral virtue. And for the rest, I suppose you will not deny that magnificence is a state which leads one purposely to choose the rational mean between vulgar profusion and shabbiness, with a view to the realisation of the beautiful.

THEOPHRASTUS. Yes, but the beautiful it realises is the literally and physically beautiful, whereas in the other cases, when you spoke of the realisation of the beautiful, you meant the morally beautiful or right.

ARISTOTLE. But is it not right that a man should aim at the beautiful? These ideas are hard to disentangle.

NICOMACHUS. You spoke of magnificence, father, as being distinguished from mere liberality by an aesthetic or intellectual element. Perhaps it ought to go down under the head of intellectual virtue.

THEOPHRASTUS. Would it not be possible for a man to have a most penetrating intellect, and yet be deficient in a taste for art?

ARISTOTLE. I suppose that is conceivable. Perhaps we ought to say that magnificence, in so far as it differs from liberality, is an aesthetic rather than a moral virtue.

THEOPHRASTUS. That leads me to question on another ground its claim to be properly considered a virtue. Can we say that it is a state of purpose, when it depends upon good taste? Surely good taste is a natural gift?

ARISTOTLE. How far good taste can be acquired is a question which we may consider another time. But in the willingness to spend at all events magnificence is a state of purpose.

THEOPHRASTUS. I wonder what led you to include magnificence in the list of virtues?

ARISTOTLE. Well, if I had begun the practice, you might wonder, but, as every one else has done it before me, there is the less cause for surprise. I can quite believe, however, that the virtue is one which owes its prominence to accidents of place and time. I told you, if you remember, in a former lecture, that I did not wish to dogmatize about the exact number of the virtues, because under different social circumstances different mental states may become prominent in that regard. Now I think we can see enough in the conditions of life around us to account for the, perhaps factitious, importance assigned to this quality, especially at Athens. Here the many poor have contrived to educate the few rich into the idea that it is their highest privilege to serve them. So many liturgies or public services are imposed upon the wealthy, that it is really better to be poor than rich at Athens; you have all the advantages of affluence without the responsibilities. Now in the performance of these services to the state there is no surer road to popular applause with so artistic a people as the Athenians than to gratify their love of art by sumptuous display. Hence, I take it, the prominence assigned among us to magnificence as a praiseworthy mental state.

LECTURE XXIV

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, IV. 3]

GREATNESS OF SOUL: THE GREAT-SOULED MAN

TO-DAY we have to do with greatness of soul.

The name itself indicates that it is concerned with great things of some kind. Let us first ask—of what kind? There are two courses open to us in treating the subject. We may deal with greatness of soul in the abstract or with the man of great soul in the concrete. Which shall it be?

NICOMACHUS. Oh do let us have it in the concrete, father! It was so interesting when you were describing the magnificent man to us, and those other characters, the ostentatious and the shabby man.

ARISTOTLE. So let it be, my son. I will endeavour to sketch to you the character of the man of great soul.

The man of great soul then is *he who thinks himself worthy of great things and is worthy of them*. Of course the latter qualification is vital to the conception. If a man thinks himself worthy of great things without being worthy of them, he is a fool, and this sufficiently disqualifies him from being considered virtuous. The same remark applies to the man who is worthy of great things, but does not think himself so: it is no proof of moral virtue to be

mistaken in your judgement. If a man is not worthy of great things, and does not think himself so, he is so far forth a man of sense, since his judgement corresponds with the reality. In this respect he is the same in kind with the man of great soul, and superior to either of the other characters whom we have mentioned. We may call him 'sober-minded.' If his merits could by some means be enhanced, he would be a man of great soul, since his judgement of himself, corresponding as it does to the reality, would expand in proportion. But, as it is, he is obviously not a man of great soul, since his merits are not great. For greatness of soul is as inseparable from greatness of merit as handsomeness from size. A person of small stature may be dainty or well-proportioned, but handsome—no. If Homer mentions a fair woman, he is pretty sure to add that she is tall. And to manly beauty size is still more essential.

Of the two extremes the man who thinks himself worthy of great things, while unworthy of them, is vain. Not that I mean to say every one is vain who thinks more of himself than he ought.

NICOMACHUS. Pardon my interrupting you, father. But how can it be that a man is not vain who thinks more of himself than he ought?

ARISTOTLE. Because his error may be unavoidable. Take, for instance, the case of a young prince brought up among flatterers. He is assured by his tutors, who are venerable persons with grey beards, that he is possessed of great abilities, and he believes them, perhaps in spite of his own impression and out of sheer modesty, because he thinks they are wiser than he. Experience may afterwards lead him to correct the error, but till it has done so, he will think too much of himself without being vain. This is one way in which the thing is possible, but besides this

we do not call a man 'vain,' until his overestimate of his own merits becomes glaring.

The man who thinks less of himself than he ought is a man of little soul, whether his merits be great or moderate, or whether they be little, but he rates himself at still less. It is the man whose merits are really great who has most of the particular vice which we are now discussing. For into what depths of self-abasement would he not fall, if his merits were less than they are?

The man of great soul, then, while in one sense in the extreme, namely, in the amount of his self-appreciation, is in the mean in point of propriety, as he estimates himself at his true worth, whereas the other two characters are in excess or defect.

But, since the man of great soul thinks himself worthy of great things, and especially of the greatest, there must be some one thing with which he will be principally concerned.

EUDEMUS. May I ask, why not several?

ARISTOTLE. Because in the nature of the case there must be some one thing which is greatest.

NICOMACHUS. Then I suppose the man of great soul thinks himself worthy of happiness, father?

ARISTOTLE. Happiness is his already, my son, since he is virtuous. I ought perhaps to explain that 'worth' is a relative idea. If a man is 'worthy,' he must be worthy of something. Now the goods of the soul belong to such a man as we are speaking of, and it is these which constitute his worth. Without them a man is really worthless, whatever claims to respect either he or others may fancy that he has. But a thing cannot be measured against itself. Worth therefore must be expressed in terms of some other goods. These other goods must be either bodily or external. But bodily goods may be put out of the question. They belong to a man or not according to the grace of

nature. Socrates was not much favoured by her in respect of beauty, and yet his, I suppose, was the greatest soul which has ever appeared among us. We are left therefore with external goods, in terms of which worth can be expressed. But some of these are too low to serve our purpose. Who, for instance, would think of measuring the worth of the great-souled man in oxen? So we come back to our former question in a more precise shape, and have now to ask—What is the greatest of external goods?

The answer to this question I conceive to be 'honour'; and I will give you three reasons for my opinion—

- (1) It is the only good which we assign to the Gods.
- (2) It is most coveted by men of dignity.
- (3) It is the prize for the noblest achievements.

The vulgar indeed seem to think that the Gods are pleased with the smell of burnt-offerings. But, as I am not now addressing a popular audience, I need not guard my words. The world will get beyond that in time.

The second argument is one from authority. What the highest minds are most eager to attain we may reasonably conclude to be best worth attaining. As to the third point, what is it for which the athlete, soldier, poet, statesman strive but honour? Again, if a man does you some paltry service, you can reward him with a few drachmas, but, if he saves your life at the risk of his own, you would insult him by the offer of money.

It is therefore to honours and dishonours that the man of great soul stands related as he ought. These are the peculiar sphere of his virtue. Perhaps indeed it has been a waste of words to prove this, for it is a thing which no one disputes. You have only to look at the world to see that the men of greatest souls are most occupied with honour. But the man who possesses the virtue of which we are speaking claims it in due proportion to his merits.

The man of little soul is doubly in the defect, for his opinion of his own merits falls short of the reality, and at the same time those merits are inferior to the worth of the man of great soul. The vain man on the other hand is in excess only as regards himself: but his merits cannot surpass those of the man of great soul.

It is clear then that the man of great soul, if he be really worthy of the greatest things, must be the best of men, seeing that a man's worth is always proportioned to his goodness. But it is not enough for him to be good, he must be greatly good. You cannot conceive of such a man running away helter-skelter or committing injustice. For why should he demean himself, who counts nothing great? And if you run through the virtues, you will find that pretensions to greatness of soul are ridiculous in one who lacks them. Nor would the honour that he claims in that case be justly his: for honour is the prize of virtue and is awarded to the good. Greatness of soul then is a kind of crowning glory of the virtues: it enhances them, at the same time that it cannot exist without them. This is what makes it so hard to be really a man of great soul, since it is not possible without perfect virtue. Honour, power, prosperity, wealth, all these things, which are goods in themselves, may be evils to a man of lesser merit, and may corrupt his virtue. The man who cannot be spoiled by them—he is the man in whom virtue has done her perfect work. And so he chooses them all, when they come in his way, but especially, as we have said, honour. When great honours are paid him by good men, he will be pleased in moderation, as though meeting with his deserts or even less than them. For what honour can be adequate to perfect virtue? He will accept it however from them, as being the greatest thing they have to offer him: but honour from ordinary folk and on trivial occasions he will utterly

despise, for that is not what he is worth. Equally indifferent will he be to dishonour from the undiscerning crowd, knowing that it cannot justly attach to him. The approbation of the few wise will be more to him than the disapprobation of the many, as Antiphon was consoled for his condemnation by the judges when Agathon approved of his defence. For he seeks not honour for its own sake, but accepts it as a proof of merit.

But, while the man of great soul is concerned principally with honour, as being the greatest of external goods, he will also show that he knows how to deal with lower goods of fortune, displaying moderation in the use of wealth and power, and preserving the same even temper of mind alike in prosperity and adversity, neither overjoyed at the one nor overgrieved at the other. For, if even honour be a small thing in his eyes, how much more will these be so? For power and wealth are choiceworthy for the sake of honour; at all events you will find those who possess them wishing to make use of them as a stepping-stone thereto.

NICOMACHUS. It must be very uncomfortable, father, to be so great that there is nothing left to care about. Does not the man of great soul take an interest in anything?

ARISTOTLE. My son, the right and beautiful is the one thing that he cares about in action; and then there is the whole world of thought open to him with the inexhaustible interest of truth. It is because his soul is set on these high objects that he presents the appearance of despising things in general. The many see that he despises the things which they esteem, and so they deem him overweening.

THEOPHRASTUS. I fancy you may have the reality, and not the mere appearance, of overweeningness at a much less cost than that of perfect virtue. Nobility will do or power or wealth. Any good is sure to be honoured by somebody, and this honour will beget a sense of merit in

the person to whom it is paid. Does not the man who possesses such goods often exhibit an overweeningness that might do credit to the greatest soul?

ARISTOTLE. Yes, but in reality it is the good man only who is honourable, though as a matter of fact, if a man possesses external goods as well as goods of soul he receives more honour than if he possessed only the latter. Virtue in purple and fine linen is not more honourable, but it is more honoured, than virtue in rags. Odysseus as a beggar-man was worth no less than the prince of Ithaca.

External goods however without virtue constitute no claim to merit at all. Nor are those who are filled with pride by them rightly to be called men of great soul. For greatness of soul is a state which supervenes only upon perfect virtue: there is no royal road to it through a windy vanity. The latter may result, however, as you say, in overweeningness and insolence. For without aid from virtue men find it hard to wear fortune's favours gracefully. And so, not being able to do this, and imagining themselves superior to the rest of the world, they despise their fellow-men, and take the liberty of acting at their own discretion. In this contempt for opinion only do they resemble the man of great soul. This indeed is the only point in which they can imitate him, for his virtuous acts are beyond their power. But the appearance of contempt presented by the man of great soul is the result of a just estimation of things. It is in fact the inevitable outcome of his virtue. There is no virtue but teaches you to think lightly of what the many irrationally regard as great. The brave man may deem a mere mob what appears to the coward an invincible host; the temperate man despises pleasures which the many over-esteem; the liberal man regards gold as dross. But the fewness of aims which characterizes the man of great soul is made up for by the intensity with which he pursues them.

He does not seek risk on petty occasions, nor is he fond of exposing himself to risk, for few objects seem to him worth it, but when some great peril has to be faced, he is there to meet it, and when he does thus expose himself to danger he is lavish of life, as though life were not worth having at all.

He is ready to confer benefits, but is ashamed to receive them. For the acceptance of benefits puts one in a position of inferiority. If he does accept them, he will return them with interest: for so the originator of the kindness will owe more than he gave, and will be the recipient of benefits.

NICOMACHUS. Have I not heard you say, father, that it requires more real generosity sometimes to accept than to bestow a favour?

ARISTOTLE. The man of great soul will be willing to practise that higher generosity towards his friend, who is a second self, but not towards strangers or ordinary acquaintances, for his motive would be misinterpreted.

THEOPHRASTUS. I have noticed that you cannot mortify a proud man more than by mentioning benefits that he has received nor please him better than by recalling those he has conferred. I suppose this proceeds from a love of superiority?

ARISTOTLE. You have a keen eye for human nature, Theophrastus, and I suspect you will turn out a satirist some day as well as a philosopher. The point you mention is well brought out by Homer. You remember how Achilles mentions at some length the services which his mother Thetis had rendered to Zeus, and then bids her go and prefer a request to him on the strength of them.

THEOPHRASTUS. I do, but I remember also that she prefacing her supplication with this very plea.

ARISTOTLE. That is true, but she has the discretion to

confine herself to a passing allusion. In other cases the poet allows his characters to repeat in so many words the instructions that are given them. The same judicious suppression of favours conferred was practised by the Lacedaemonian ambassadors towards the Athenians, when they were sent to request their aid against the Thebans. They judged rightly that they would be more likely to effect their object with a proud people like the Athenians by recalling the services which they had already rendered to their countrymen.

NICOMACHUS. But ought the man of great soul to desire to be superior to every one else, father?

ARISTOTLE. He ought and he does desire to be superior in virtue, my son. That is a form of competition which will do the world no harm. But in anything else he will be ready to yield the superiority to others. It is one of his characteristics then, as I was saying, that he is zealous to confer services, but that he asks no one for them, or, if he does, it is with reluctance. If he is haughty, it will be to men of wealth and position, but he will be invariably polite towards persons of moderate station. To assert his superiority over the former is a hard and dignified thing, but over the latter it is easy: there is nothing ungenerous in meeting pride with pride, but to display the same quality in the presence of the humble is vulgar, like showing off one's strength on the weak.

He will not seek honour, but let it come to him, and therefore he will not be eager to deprive others of their pre-eminence. And so he presents an appearance of inactivity and dilatoriness, until there comes an occasion for great honour or some great achievement. He is inclined to few undertakings, but those few are great and memorable.

Such a man also must be open in his likes and dislikes, for secrecy is a sign of fear. And he must care for truth

more than for opinion, and speak and act openly. The small regard he has for things makes him free of utterance. And so he naturally adheres to truth in what he says, except in so far as he underrates his real merits, as he will do towards the multitude.

He is not the man who can subordinate his life to another's, unless that other be a friend. For to do so, except from the motive of love, is a slavish thing. This is why all flatterers are servile, and humble people are flatterers.

He is not prone to admiration, for nothing is great in his eyes.

He does not bear grudges. For it is not the part of a man of great soul to store things up in his memory, especially when they had better be forgotten, but rather to overlook them.

He does not talk about people—neither about himself nor yet about his neighbour. For he does not care to be praised himself nor to have others blamed.

THEOPHRASTUS. That is a hard hit at self-love and gossip. I will try to confine myself to talking of things in future. But might not a man speak of others with a view to praising them?

ARISTOTLE. The man of great soul is not much given to praising ; and the same tendencies of mind make him refrain from abuse, even of his enemies, unless he means to insult them to their faces.

He is the last man to go whining and begging about the petty things of everyday life ; for this would argue a serious interest in them.

If you look at his property, you will find that it assumes the form of the beautiful and unprofitable rather than of the profitable and useful. The man who is sufficient to himself will still like to be surrounded by objects of beauty.

But now I am getting beyond the limits of the great-souled man himself. I have given you the picture: you can yourselves supply the frame.

THEOPHRASTUS. I should like to hear something about his personal appearance before you stop.

ARISTOTLE. Well, you may imagine him to yourself as a man of slow step, of deep voice, and deliberate utterance. It is your fussy little men who walk fast and speak in shrill tones. Such then is the man of great soul.

The man of little soul and the vain man, who are in defect and excess, do not seem to be exactly bad characters, any more than the extremes in the case of the magnificent man. For they do no actual harm, and are mistaken rather than vicious.

The man of little soul, though worthy of good things, deprives himself of what he is worth. He seems to put himself at a disadvantage from not thinking himself worthy of good, and to be deficient in self-knowledge: for otherwise he must have aimed at what he is worth, seeing that it is good. I would not say however that such people are fools, but rather diffident. Their error, however, from whatever cause arising, does seem to exercise a deteriorating influence upon their character. For they are deterred from noble actions and pursuits by this feeling of their own unworthiness. In the same way they are debarred from external goods, and would be afraid to undertake the responsibilities of fortune. Instead of availing themselves of the flowing tide of prosperity, when it sets towards wealth and power, they will deliberately furl their sails for fear of hidden rocks and quicksands.

The vain we need not hesitate to call fools. They display ignorance of themselves, and that too glaringly. For they put their hands to high things, as though they were worthy to cope with them, and then they get found out; also they

dress fine, and give themselves airs, and so on, and wish their good fortune to be manifest to all the world, and talk about themselves, expecting by these means to attain honour.

EUDEMUS. You have generally pronounced a judgement as to the comparative merits of the two extreme states. May I ask which do you consider the worse vice—littleness of soul or vanity?

ARISTOTLE. Littleness of soul. It is at once more common and worse.

THEOPHRASTUS. I should have thought there were more people in the world who thought too much of themselves than too little.

ARISTOTLE. As I said before, we don't call every one 'vain' who thinks too much of himself. It must be done so as to attract attention. But the commonness of littleness of soul may be measured by the rarity of greatness.

THEOPHRASTUS. I think that's hardly a fair measure, since the men who are not of great souls include the vain and the sober-minded as well as the men of little souls.

ARISTOTLE. I believe I have been betrayed into an ambiguity. When I answered Eudemus I was thinking of the number of people in the world whose souls are not capable of great things at all, which was certainly not the meaning that I was giving to the word throughout the lecture.

THEOPHRASTUS. But would you say that littleness of soul, in the sense of an underestimate of one's own merits, even where those merits are great, is a worse vice than vanity?

ARISTOTLE. Yes, I think I would adhere to that statement. Of course we must not allow the fact of a man's merits being great to prejudice our judgement. The question is, whether it is better for a man to underestimate or overestimate his merits, whatever they are. I believe the

world gains more than it loses by vanity. The vain man at all events essays high enterprises, and sometimes succeeds, whereas the opposite character does not try at all. Again, the vain man may fail and make himself ridiculous, but his failure teaches him wisdom and sobriety, whereas the opposite character simply goes on from bad to worse, since his energies rust from inactivity.

EUDEMUS. I remember to have heard a thing which I thought very strange from one of the disciples of Speusippus. He said that Speusippus was lecturing one day on the characteristics of foreign nations—I suppose he got his materials from Plato—and mentioned that there were certain barbarians—Jews I think he called them—who thought that the most virtuous man was he who thought himself least worthy. This state of mind, he said, they called 'humility.'

ARISTOTLE. That is indeed a strange opinion. I do not exactly see how humility can be a virtue, when it consists in knowing that you are not virtuous.

EUDEMUS. They seem to think that to know their own viciousness is the only virtue they can have, just as Socrates thought that the only wisdom was to know one's own ignorance.

ARISTOTLE. Well, if they are right in their opinion about themselves, they must be very depraved; and if they are wrong—why then there can be no virtue in being mistaken. You do not praise a man for being deceived about another person. Why then should you praise him for being deceived about himself? If we have a true estimate of our own merits, we shall all be 'humble' enough to satisfy any right conception of virtue. The man of great soul is humble in this sense: it is the transcendence of his merits that makes him appear overweening. If a man felt himself to be like a god, I suppose he would not shrink from being worshipped.

LECTURE XXV

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, IV. 4-7]

LOVE OF HONOUR : GENTLENESS : THE SOCIAL
VIRTUES : FRIENDLINESS : TRUTHFULNESS

GREATNESS of soul, as we have seen, deals with honour: but as it implies transcendent merit, it necessarily deals with honour on a transcendent scale. But honour, or the esteem of our fellow-men, is an important factor in the concerns of everyday life, and the right regulation of our desire for it constitutes a civic virtue of no slight practical importance. This virtue, we have already said, bears the same relation to greatness of soul as liberality does to magnificence. Neither it nor liberality are virtues of a transcendent kind, but rather states of mind which dispose us properly with regard to moderate or small things. Now, just as in the taking and giving of money there is a mean and excess and defect, so also in the craving for honour there is a more or less than is right and a right source and a right way. But though the states of mind with regard to honour are definite enough, it is not so easy to affix names to them. What are we to call the man who exhibits a proper appreciation of honour? The term 'ambitious,' apart from the fact that it indicates a thirst

for power rather than for honour, is ambiguous. Sometimes we use it in a bad sense for one who covets honour more than he ought and is willing to accept it from improper sources, and sometimes we use it as a term of praise to indicate the possession of a manly spirit and high aims. The same doubtfulness of meaning is reflected in its contrary. Sometimes we stigmatize a man as 'unambitious' for not setting honour before himself as an incentive to right actions; at other times we use the same term in a laudatory sense to convey the idea of a moderate and sober-minded disposition. This is a subject on which we touched before in our initial sketch of the virtues. We may trace the cause of the ambiguity to its source in the twofold use of the expression 'fond of so and so.' This sometimes signifies a greater fondness than marks the crowd and sometimes a greater fondness than is right. So that to call a man 'fond of honour,' or to give him any epithet equivalent thereto, may naturally be taken to imply either praise or dispraise. This namelessness of the mean state emboldens the extremes to claim it for themselves as though it had no rightful owner: but as there is an excess and a defect, it is plain that there must also be a mean. We can see that some men crave for honour too much and that others are too little concerned about it: therefore we may be sure that there is an exactly right way of dealing with it, which lies somewhere between the two wrong ones. This is the state which is deemed worthy of praise, being a mean with regard to honour, though without a name. But as compared with ambition, it seems a want of ambition, and as compared with the want of ambition, it seems ambition, and so it presents in a way a double-faced appearance of being both. The same remark might be made of the virtues generally. But in this case the characters in the extreme are brought into more marked

antithesis to one another owing to the person who observes the due mean between them having no recognised name of his own.

On the threshold of the social virtues, specially so called, we come across the control of the temper. The sphere of this virtue is feelings of anger. We may call the state of mind itself 'gentleness,' though misleading associations might attach themselves if we applied the corresponding adjective to the person who exhibits it. But the use of 'gentleness' itself for the perfect state with regard to anger is not quite satisfactory, as it rather implies an inclination towards the defect, which is again without a name. We have here in short another of those cases in which the analysis effected for us by language falls far short of the most elementary requirements of thought. But the excess may fairly be called 'passionateness,' for the feeling concerned is always anger or passion, however different may be the causes which excite it. Now he who feels this only on the right occasions, and with the right persons, and in the right way, and at the right time, and for the right length of time, is the person who deserves to be praised. He will be the 'gentle' man, if we use 'gentleness' in a good sense, to express the mean. For by the 'gentle' man you must understand me to mean one who is of unruffled temper, and who does not allow himself to be carried away by passion, but rather has passion under his own control, and feels anger only in such a way and on such occasions and for such a length of time as reason prescribes. In popular estimation he errs on the side of defect, for the gentle person is not vindictive but forgiving. But the defect, whether it be 'a want of passion,' or 'insensibility to anger,' or 'slavishness,' or 'stupidity,' is blamed. For we look with contempt on the understanding of a man who is not angry on the right occasions, and in the right way,

and at the right time, and with the right people. It is thought that such a person has no perception or sense of pain, and that, as he is not angered, he is not likely to defend himself. Now to brook being insulted, and to allow one's relations to be so, is a slavish and degraded thing.

As to the excess, it may occur indeed in every form ; for it is possible to be angry with the wrong persons and on the wrong occasions, and more than one ought, and sooner than one ought, and to remain angry for too long a time : but from the nature of the case all these attributes are not found united in the same person. That would be impossible. For evil, happily, has no principle of cohesion within itself : it is the good that is mixed with it which keeps it from self-destruction ; make it entire and it becomes intolerable. We will distinguish therefore between various species of excess.

Though we used the name 'passionateness' for the excess generally, it may now be convenient to confine 'passionate' to a narrower meaning. The passionate then get into a passion quickly, and with the wrong persons, and on the wrong occasions, and more than they ought, but they leave off quickly too ; and this is the best point about them. This is the case with them because they do not keep in their anger, but disclose it by reprisals, owing to their quickness of temper, and then have done with it.

The 'hasty' or 'touchy' are quick in excess, and fly into a passion at everything and on every occasion ; whence their name.

The fault both of the passionate and of the hasty lies chiefly in the direction of getting angry sooner than they ought.

The 'sulky,' who conceal their passion, are a different species from the foregoing. They are hard to reconcile,

and keep up their anger for a long time. It is only when the opportunity for retaliation has come that they cease from it. For vengeance puts an end to anger by making pleasure take the place of pain. So long as this is not the case they carry their sulk about with them like an undigested load on the stomach. For, owing to its not being manifest, no one even tries to soothe them ; and for a man to digest his anger within himself is a process which requires time. Such people are the greatest nuisances both to themselves and to their dearest friends.

The 'harsh' or 'stern' are like the sulky in carrying anger too far, but they are more open in their avowal of it. It is useless to talk of forgiveness and peace to them : for they will not be reconciled without vengeance or punishment.

Of the two extremes it is the excess rather than the defect that is more opposed to gentleness. Two reasons may be assigned for this. One is that it is of more frequent occurrence, inasmuch as revenge is more natural to man than submission to injuries. The other is that an undue tendency to anger is fatal to the amenities of social intercourse, whereas the want of passion is not. You may despise the meek and submissive, but you can always get on with them.

In a former lecture, when I was giving you some practical hints for the attainment of the mean, I used the control of the temper as an instance to show how impossible it is to lay down precise rules for conduct under particular circumstances. We have had to speak vaguely and generally of the right manner, persons, occasions, and length of time for anger, whereas the questions which practically interest us are definite and particular—Am I right in being angry with this or that person, in this particular way, and for this sort of conduct? Up to what point am I right in carrying

my anger, and where do I begin to fall into error? These problems, as I said, must be left to the individual to solve for himself. They involve a multitude of details, and the decision of them depends upon immediate perception. A slight divergence in the direction either of excess or defect does not attract blame. Indeed we sometimes praise those who are in the defect by calling them 'gentle,' and sometimes we bestow the praise of manliness on the harsh and stern, as though they displayed a capacity for rule. The only thing that can be asserted positively is that the mean state is the praiseworthy one, in accordance with which we are angry with the right persons, and on the right occasions, and in the right way, and so on, whereas the excesses and defects are blameworthy; and if they occur to a small extent, they are slightly so, if to a further extent, more so, and if to a great extent, very much so. It is plain therefore that it is the mean state we must adhere to.

Let so much then suffice for the states of mind connected with anger.

We advance now to what we have called the social virtues, which regulate a man's demeanour in his intercourse with his fellows, in all that give-and-take of word and act which makes up the sum of what we call daily life. There are some men whose one object is to give pleasure. Their praise has no moral value, for they are ready to praise indiscriminately. They never oppose you in anything, and think the object of social intercourse is achieved if they give no pain to those whom they meet. People of this stamp we may call over-complaisant or obsequious.

Diametrically opposed to these are the men who cross you in everything, and do not care a snap about giving pain. They are called 'cantankerous' and 'quarrelsome.'

It is easy to see that both the states of mind above

described are blameworthy, and that the state which deserves praise must be intermediate between the two, leading a man to tolerate what he ought and as he ought, and to show displeasure under similar conditions. No name in particular has been assigned to this happy mean, but, as it bears a certain resemblance to friendship, we may call it 'friendliness.' For the man who attains the mean state is just the kind of person whom we would describe as 'a kind and wise friend,' if only the element of affection were superadded. But just herein lies the difference between friendliness and friendship. Friendship is inspired by affection towards a particular person ; friendliness is devoid of emotion and addresses itself to no one person more than to another. It is not love or hate that leads the man who possesses this virtue to accept or reject everything with the perfect propriety with which he does : he achieves this as the natural result of his character. He will behave in the same way impartially to all, whether they be strangers or acquaintances, familiar or unfamiliar. Only he will act in every case with a due sense of propriety. For it is not proper to show the same sort of regard for strangers as for intimates, nor yet to put them to pain in the same way. One may sometimes feel called upon to put a friend to some temporary pain or inconvenience for his own good, whereas the same thing would be mere impertinence in the case of a stranger. Now the friendly man will, as we have said, in all cases observe the proprieties ; but he will make it his special aim to avoid giving pain, or even to contribute to pleasure, so far as that may be done consistently with the sense of right and expediency, which must be the guiding-star of his conduct. The sphere in which he displays his virtue being the pleasures and pains of social intercourse, he will not shrink from giving pain when occasion demands it. If he finds the company into which he is thrown

indulging in pleasures that are either wrong or injurious, he will set his face against them, and will choose to give pain by opposing them rather than to give pleasure by a weak compliance. Especially will this be the case, if the subsequent disgrace or hurt be great as contrasted with the immediate pain caused by opposition. And just as he will give a little present pain to avert a greater pain in the future, so also will he give a little present pain to secure a great pleasure to come. This is a line of conduct which would not occur to the obsequious man, whose one thought is to give pleasure. But the motive of the friendly man being a sense of right will make his conduct very different from that of the character who is always ready to meet your views in everything. The latter is 'Hail, fellow, well met !' with every one; the former preserves a sense of proportion in his affability and adjusts his behaviour to his different associates, according as they are men of mark or ordinary folk, and according to his degree of acquaintanceship with them, assigning to each his due and choosing in and for itself to enhance the pleasure of the company in which he finds himself, while careful to avoid giving pain, but at the same time not doing this indiscriminately, but letting himself be guided by results, if they are important—I mean by what is right and expedient.

Such then is the character in the mean, whom we have called 'friendly,' but to whom common language has not assigned a name.

The excess in the case of this virtue is an exclusive attempt to give pleasure, involving the avoidance of pain even when wholesome and necessary. If this characteristic proceeds from a mere desire to make oneself agreeable, without any ulterior motive, we call the person who exhibits it 'obsequious,' and his state of mind 'obsequiousness' or 'over-complaisance'; but if there be present the motive of

benefit to oneself in the way of money or money's worth, then the thing assumes an uglier look, and we call the man a flatterer.

The defect is the state of mind which has no desire to give pleasure to others and no hesitation about giving pain. As the mean was called 'friendliness,' this extreme, which is the more strongly opposed to it of the two, may be called 'enmity.' I have spoken of the person who is in this state as cantankerous and quarrelsome, but you may label him, if you like, 'the inimical man.'

The namelessness of the mean again leaves the extremes in antagonism as the only apparent contraries.

The social virtues generally have for their sphere intercourse in word and act. Social intercourse involves a reference (1) to oneself, (2) to others. The virtue with which we have already dealt leads to the right treatment of others both in speech and conduct. We have now to consider a virtue, which has more especial reference to oneself, though of course to oneself in relation to others, else it would not be a social virtue. It exhibits itself in the personal pretensions which men make by what they say or do.

The perfect state to which I refer has no definite name of its own, but you can gather its nature when I tell you that its excess is boastfulness. Nevertheless it a good philosophical exercise to discuss such nameless states. For we shall better understand the subject of moral character, after we have gone into the details, and shall feel assured that the virtues are mean states, when a comprehensive glance has revealed to us that it is so in every case.

In speaking of himself a man may either state the truth or not; and, if he departs from the truth, he must either overstate the facts or understate them. The man who lays

claim to creditable things or qualities which do not belong to him at all, or to a greater extent than they do, is set down as a boaster. He who, on the other hand, denies or extenuates the facts about himself may be called, for want of a better name, a self-depreciator. Between these two it is possible to steer a middle course. You may have a man who is a straightforward kind of person, instinctively truthful both in life and conversation, who admits the facts about himself, without trying to make them out either greater or less than they really are.

It is possible to behave in these various ways either with a motive or without. But, of course, if you want to discern a man's true disposition, you must take him at a time when he is not concealing it for some ulterior object. As a general rule a man speaks, acts and lives in his own natural character; the occasions on which he assumes another are exceptional. Now, as falsehood is in its own nature base and blameable, while truth is noble and praiseworthy, we may safely set down the two characters who habitually depart from truth as deserving of censure, and the man who instinctively seeks it as deserving of commendation. But of the two forms of departure from truth, boastfulness is the more to be blamed.

Let us speak of all three characters, taking the truthful man first.

It must be understood, to begin with, that we are looking at truthfulness in its social, rather than in its strictly moral aspect. The moral virtue of veracity falls under the head of justice; it has to do with compacts, and consists chiefly in not deceiving one's neighbour to his hurt. The social virtue of truthfulness has to do with things morally indifferent, and consists in not annoying one's companions by an unfounded or affected way of talking about oneself. But the lighter virtue of which we are speaking may fairly

be taken as an index of the graver one. For if a man loves truth for its own sake and tells it in matters where it makes no difference, much more will he be likely to do so where some moral issue comes in, and where the stigma of censure is superadded to the inherent baseness of a lie. The kind of person then of whom we are speaking is one who deserves our approbation. When he does deflect from truth, it is in the direction of defect. This has an appearance of better taste owing to the odiousness of exaggerating one's own merits.

We come now to the person who exhibits this odious fault. If it is committed without any motive, the error is comparatively a venial one. Such a person indeed must be pronounced a poor sort of character, else there would not have been this delight in a lie, but he seems to be more of a fool than a knave. This disinterested and aimless boasting is simply part of the general habit of lying, which has attractions for some minds.

Where there is a motive for the falsehood, we may distinguish between the man who boasts with a view to enhancing his reputation and the man who boasts with a view to filling his purse. The latter is a more unseemly character than the former, just in proportion as wealth is a more ignoble aim than honour.

Of course it is not the mere power to boast that makes the boaster, any more than it is the mere power to lie that makes the liar generally, else God and the good man would have to be called both—it is not the power, I say, to boast that makes the boaster, but the will. Boasting is a bad habit which is voluntarily contracted and is therefore blameworthy in all its forms. But the will to boast may proceed, as we have seen, either from the mere love of falsehood or else from a desire for glory or gain. The things about which men boast are different according to

the motive by which they are actuated. If their aim be glory, they lay claim to such things as attract praise or admiration ; if it be gain, they direct their pretensions rather to things of interest to their neighbours, and with regard to which they cannot easily be brought to book. Hence the number of sham prophets and quack doctors. Men would give a great deal to obtain a knowledge of the future, and it is not easy to expose an impostor in this matter, when public credulity sets down every lucky guess to his credit. Similarly the power to cure the diseases of the body is of vital concern to mankind. And how easy it is to obtain a reputation of this sort, when the effects of the healing powers of nature are ascribed to a bread-pill, if only it be administered with due solemnity !

The self-depreciatory, who say less than the truth, appear more refined characters. There is no suspicion of an interested motive about them, but they are moved by a desire to avoid pomposity. This is apparent from the fact that it is creditable qualities above all which they seek to disown, as was the case with Socrates. His professions of ignorance were regarded by his contemporaries as ironical, and have stamped upon the word 'irony' the meaning of dissimulation of knowledge. This is part of the mental attribute which we are discussing, but only part, since self-depreciation may be practised with regard to other merits besides that of knowledge. So long as the merits are really great, and not too apparent, there is something respectable about the disavowal of them, but, when the same practice is extended to small and obvious merits, it passes into affectation and humbug, serving only to excite contempt. It may even meet the opposite extreme and amount to boastfulness, as in the affected austerity of the Lacedaemonian garb, especially as worn by their imitators. For both the excess and the extreme defect have a touch of swagger.

But, as I have said, the moderate use of self-depreciation with regard to things that are not too obvious and palpable is not unpleasing in social intercourse. This leaves the boaster to figure as the opposite of the truthful man, since his extreme is the worse of the two.

LECTURE XXVI

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, IV. 8, 9]

THE SOCIAL VIRTUES CONTINUED : WIT : REMARKS
ON THE SOCIAL VIRTUES : THE QUASI-VIRTUES—
SHAME AND INDIGNATION

WE have already completed our review of life and conduct in their more serious aspects. But what would life be without its amusements? And we must not leave our virtue behind us when we indulge in moments of relaxation. We have therefore to-day to consider a quality which prescribes the proper behaviour with regard to diversion and amusement, what kind of things one may say, and how one ought to say them, and also what kind of things it is proper to listen to. But there will be a difference between speaking on such occasions and listening to what is said. The man who attains the perfect mean will not expect from all others the same standard of refinement that he exacts from himself.

Now that there is a mean to be attained in these matters, as well as in others, is evident from the fact that there is an excess and defect. Just as in the matter of food some persons are squeamish and refuse this, that, and the other, whereas others are voracious of anything, so you will find

some who practise abstention or total abstinence in the way of joking, whereas others have an omnivorous appetite for a jest. The latter are vulgar persons, who will have their fun at all costs, and whose aim is rather to raise a laugh than to say what is seemly and avoid giving pain to their butt. The former are a kind of social savages, who do not understand the intercourse of civilised beings: instead of contributing to the mirth of the moment, they get angry with every one who does. We all know these characters, but I am somewhat at a loss as to what names to give to them. Let us call your funny men, who are in excess 'buffoons,' and those who are in the defect 'clownish' and 'maladroit.' Between them is the man of polite wit, urbane and versatile. The latter term aptly expresses the happy turns and sallies of his genius, which are always within the limits of good taste. To appreciate the full beauty of a fine character, you must see it thus at play, just as you judge best of an animal from its movements. You do not purchase a horse until it has been put through its paces, nor can you realise the beauty of a panther unless you have the opportunity of watching its lithe and agile motions.

Of the two extremes the excess is more common than the defect. For food for laughter abounds everywhere, and the majority of men take more delight than they ought in amusement and jesting, so that buffoons, who suit their taste, sometimes pass for wits. But that there is a difference, and no slight one, is plain from what has been said.

The chief feature which distinguishes the man of polite wit from the buffoon is the tact which marks his utterances. It is characteristic of a man of tact to say and listen to such things as are befitting to a good man and a gentleman. For there are certain things that are becoming to such a person to say and listen to in the way of amusement, and

the playfulness of a gentleman and of an educated person differs from that of the low and uneducated. The sort of difference that there is between the two may be illustrated by a comparison between the old and new comedies. In the former the fun was gross and personal, in the latter it is veiled by innuendo. Whether the moral tone is raised by the change is a question that might be argued, but there is at all events a vast difference in the way of decorum.

How then are we to define the man whose jests are in good taste? Is it by his saying what is befitting to a gentleman? Or by his not giving pain to the object of his raillery? Or even by his giving pleasure? In view of the infinite divergences of taste, the last at all events would be a very hazy definition. But, in dealing with a thing so nebulous and evanescent as wit, we cannot expect a hard and fast one. Perhaps the safest thing we can say is that the jests of such a person will give pleasure to a man of right judgement, even if they are directed against himself.

To be able to take a joke in good part is no mean social merit and is itself part of the virtue we are considering. For we may say that there is a passive as well as an active side to wit, and that the enjoyment of a joke is itself a sign of humour. The nature of some persons attains only to the passive side of this excellence, just as there are many people who intensely enjoy poetry, though they would never dream of composing it.

What a man of taste will listen to is determined largely, though, as I told you at starting, not entirely by what he would be ready to say himself. For a man's company reacts upon his character. What he is ready to listen to he will be apt to say, and baseness on the lips is never far from baseness in act. Now as the good man will not do everything, it follows that he will not say everything. There are certain forms of jesting which are no better than,

abuse, and wit under one of its aspects is only cultured insolence. From such jibes as these he will abstain as carefully as if they were forbidden by law. Perhaps indeed they ought to have been forbidden, only that such legislation would not be easy to enforce. But the good man and the gentleman will serve as a law to himself in such matters. It is the use of philosophy to render law superfluous.

Such then is the character of him who attains the mean, whether he be called a man of tact or a man of wit.

The buffoon, as we have said, cannot resist a joke, and spares neither himself nor others, if only he can raise a laugh. He says things of a sort that a man of refinement would never say, and some that he would not even listen to.

As to the social savage, he is useless for this sort of intercourse: he contributes nothing to it himself and gets annoyed with those who do. But as relaxation and amusement are a necessity in life, we are justified in regarding him as a nuisance to society.

Now I have described to you three mean states as to the conduct of social life, all of them having to do with intercourse in word and act. But they differ, in that the one has to do with truth and the other two with the agreeable. Of the latter however one is concerned with the agreeable in the way of amusement and the other in social intercourse generally.

NICOMACHUS. Now you have come back to the order which you gave us in the scheme, father. I wonder why you departed from it.

ARISTOTLE. I took friendliness first as being the most important of the three, since it penetrates into every department of life. Wit I left to the last, like the colouring of the eyes of a statue. The order of relative importance was

what pressed itself on me in speaking. But I grant that it is attended with the inconvenience of thrusting in the virtue which deals with truth between the two which deal with the agreeable. In a logical summary one instinctively avoids this. But I have no superstitious regard for order, and I hope every one will hold himself free to arrange the virtues as best pleases him.

EUDEMUS. If I were allowed that liberty, the first use I would make of it would be to bring gentleness more to the front in the list of virtues. The two cardinal virtues of courage and temperance could hardly be dislodged from their places, but I would put the control of the temper immediately after them, both on account of its intrinsic importance, and also because, like them, it deals with an animal impulse. As the feeling which it controls is part of spirit or passion, there is some temptation to put it next to courage. But what you have just said is a warning against preferring mere logical neatness to the gross importance of a thing. What you said in a previous lecture about courage and temperance being in a way open to the lower animals, as well as to man, would apply, I suppose, equally to gentleness, and entitle it to be ranked near them. The dog unites in itself the two virtues of courage and gentleness—at least some dogs do.

ARISTOTLE. I am glad you have found voice again, Eudemus, to help me with your remarks and suggestions. I felt almost disconcerted last time when the lecture was allowed to close without a single remark from any of you.

EUDEMUS. I daresay the silence of the others was due to the same cause as my own. I was waiting till we had the account of the social virtues before us as a whole. But your kindness emboldens me now to give vent to the reflexions that have occurred to me. I have been thinking since last lecture about that nameless virtue which has to

do with the love of honour, and it has occurred to me to doubt whether the love of honour can be considered a virtue at all, at least on the same ideal level as the rest. The man of great soul does not make honour his motive, but only accepts it as his due. If a man were constantly guided in his actions by a sense of right, there would be no room in his mind for the love of honour.

ARISTOTLE. I am glad that you should think for yourself. If any one should ever use the name of Aristotle to stop your doing so, you will bear me witness that the real Aristotle never sought to stifle inquiry by dogma.

EUDEMUS. Then I will tell you of another point which Theophrastus and I were talking over yesterday. In treating of friendliness you told us that the man who overdoes it was a flatterer, if he had an interested motive, and obsequious, or over-complaisant, if he had not. Now it seemed to us that there was more than a difference of motive between the obsequious man and the flatterer, and, aided by some hints in your lecture, we ended by making out two sets of characters. We had the friendly man intermediate between the flatterer and the inimical man—the flatterer ready to praise everything, the inimical man willing to praise nothing, and the friendly man prompt to approve of anything that deserved approval, but not shrinking from condemning what deserved disapprobation.

THEOPHRASTUS. In fact, our friendly man stood to others in somewhat the same relation as the truthful man to himself.

EUDEMUS. The special sphere of these states we thought was praise and dispraise of others. Then as to willingness to converse with others and make oneself agreeable, we thought that 'reserve' might be the happy mean between obsequiousness and surliness. The obsequious man is the humble servant of everybody, the surly man will not put

himself out of the way for anybody and cares only to please himself, the reserved man will be affable and obliging under the right conditions.

ARISTOTLE. I am very glad to find that I have set you thinking in this way: but I am not sure that you have not been straying into over-refinement. By having two mean states in social relations, instead of the one of friendliness, you incur the danger either of unduly limiting their spheres or else of running them into one another. If friendliness is confined to praise and dispraise, its sphere is too narrow; if you let it extend further, you will find it difficult to distinguish it from what you call 'reserve,' which implies being agreeable under the right circumstances. But let us postpone further discussion until I have completed this part of my subject by saying a few words about shame and indignation, which we appended to the virtues as a sort of supplement.

Shame and indignation resemble virtues in two respects—

- (1) They are praised.
- (2) They are means.

I need hardly remind you that both of these things are characteristics of virtue.

But, on the other hand, shame and indignation are not entitled to be called virtues for two reasons—

- (1) Because they are mere feelings, not permanent states.
- (2) Because they imply badness, either in oneself or others, and, therefore, are only hypothetically good.

So much may be said of both in common, but we will speak now of each separately.

And first of shame.

When we say that shame is praised, this must be understood with due qualifications. The feeling is not befitting to every period of life, but only to youth. The young are

liable to be swayed by passion, and, as many of their passions prompt them to wrong-doing, it is well that they should have shame to deter them from it. Therefore we praise the young for being susceptible to shame: for it is a safeguard, though a somewhat precarious one, against error. But the mature man should have his passions under the control of reason, and therefore we do not praise him for being liable to the same feeling. We think that he should have got beyond the necessity for it.

Modesty, or a proper sense of shame, is a mean between bashfulness and shamelessness. Of the two extremes shamelessness, which is the defect, is a worse evil than bashfulness, which is the excess. Bashfulness, indeed, so long as it possesses a man, incapacitates him for action, but it generally wears off with experience and the advance of years. But shamelessness is an incurable evil. For if it comes from nature, there is no remedy for it, whereas, if it be brought on voluntarily, it is far easier to expel the blush from the cheek than to recall it thereto.

But, though shame is praised and may be considered a good thing in the sense that it is preventive of evil, it does not follow that it is a virtue. It partakes more of the nature of a passing emotion than of a settled state. At all events it is defined by the Platonists as 'a fear of ill-repute,' though it is doubtful whether they are quite exact in so defining it. For to represent shame as a species of fear would be to refer it to the spirited element in man—I mean, of course, to the defect of it—whereas shame seems rather to have its seat in the reason. Hence we should have the species and the genus falling under different heads. Perhaps we had better keep to the definition which I gave in the course on Rhetoric, and say that shame is 'a kind of pain or disturbance connected with evils past, present, or to come, which appear to lead to ill-repute.'

THEOPHRASTUS. But does not that again involve a difficulty? Pain has its abode in the appetitive part of man's nature: for I suppose that wherever pleasure is, there pain is, and you have told us that pleasure is the object of appetite. So that we should again have the species referred to a different head from the genus.

ARISTOTLE. It was in view of that difficulty that I was careful to say 'a kind of pain,' indicating that the word was not being used in its primary or literal sense. Strictly speaking, pleasure and pain are purely physical affections, but the transferred meaning has become so common that we have ceased to think of it as a metaphor.

EUDEMUS. I have a difficulty in following you when you say that shame has its seat in the reason. You began by saying that it was an emotion.

ARISTOTLE. True, but there are emotions and emotions. Shame implies calculation as to the effect of one's own conduct on the opinion of one's fellows. The lower animals do not seem liable to it. It is because man is rational that he is able to feel shame. But though shame involves an element of reason, it is none the less an emotion. Like other emotions, it takes effect on the body. When people are ashamed, they grow red, just as when they are afraid, they grow white. If you talk of shame as fear, you will have to distinguish between the red fear and the white fear.

When we admitted that shame was under certain circumstances praiseworthy, we did so only on the ground that it was preventive of evil. But virtue is not merely preventive of evil, but productive of good. Therefore shame is not a virtue. The virtuous man is as much above shame as the shameless man is below it. Since shame is consequent upon base deeds, the virtuous man will have nothing to do with it, for such deeds must not be done.

THEOPHRASTUS. But are there not many things which

are conventionally disgraceful, without being really so? The good man, I suppose, might do these on occasions, and be ashamed, if surprised in them by strangers. For I suppose it would be true to say that this conventional shame is felt chiefly before strangers and shame at what is really wrong before friends and acquaintances.

ARISTOTLE. I think that last remark of yours is true and shows observation. But in my opinion the good man will not do anything to be ashamed of. He will refrain from things that are unseemly without being actually wrong. For instance, he will not munch nuts in the market-place. If he does run counter to public opinion, it will be done deliberately, and for the sake of example, and then he will not be ashamed of himself.

For a man to claim that he is virtuous because he is ashamed of himself when he has done wrong, whereas his neighbour perhaps is not, is ridiculous. For shame is consequent upon voluntary acts ; and, if he be virtuous, he will never voluntarily do what is base.

All that we can say is that shame is hypothetically good ; it is good if—but virtue is good without an 'if.'

EUDEMUS. But is not shamelessness admittedly bad? And shamelessness is the opposite of this proper sense of shame, of which you have been speaking. If shamelessness then is bad, I suppose shame under certain circumstances is good.

ARISTOTLE. Quite so ; 'under certain circumstances' only. That is the thing which I wish to impress upon you. It is not good in itself. Shamelessness is bad ; to do what is wrong and then be ashamed of oneself is bad also : but subject to the condition of wrong having been done, it is better that a man should be ashamed of himself than that he should not. To admit this is plainly very different from admitting shame to be virtuous. Shame is a sign of

vice. How then can it be a virtue? It would be more reasonable to reckon self-control among the virtues, for that is at least a state. But we have not done that, but have reserved it for separate treatment subsequently, on the ground that it involves elements of evil as well as of good—evil in that it implies bad desires, good in that these are kept in check. I think I have told you this once or twice before.

NICOMACHUS. Yes, father, and I have been thinking over it, and wondering whether there could be any virtue except by a struggle against vice, or any good except by a contrast with evil.

ARISTOTLE. You are certainly doing your best all of you to make up for your silence at our last meeting. Here is my son propounding one of the deepest of problems, just as I thought I was nearing the end of my lecture. A very brief answer must suffice to indicate my view of the matter.

It is certainly true that all the moral virtues involve a reference to evil. They are the rules of conduct which teach us to play our part worthily in this bodily life of ours, in which evil is rife as well as good. But I have endeavoured in my delineation of them to represent them as states of feeling pure from any admixture of evil in the mind, which cannot be said of self-control, and still less of shame. Perhaps Eudemus was right also in thinking that I had fallen below this ideal level in admitting the love of honour in any shape as a virtue. Certainly our language seems to bear him out in that contention, in that it provides no name for the feeling except one that usually implies blame.

THEOPHRASTUS. It seems to me that the love of honour, so far as it is a virtue, or a substitute for virtue, might be described as the obverse of the proper sense of shame, of which you have been speaking. The one inculcates a due desire for the esteem of one's fellows; the other

a due dislike, since I must not say fear, of their censure. I suppose you would regard both of these feelings as beneficial to society in default of that single-minded devotion to the right and beautiful, which you told us was the only moral motive.

EUDEMUS. If the sense of shame is to act thus as a second string to one's bow in securing right conduct, perhaps you would admit its utility beyond the period of youth. You certainly seemed to do so in describing civil courage.

ARISTOTLE. It is a great advantage to have intelligent and slightly critical hearers. They keep one up to the mark of self-consistency. But let us complete our scheme now by saying a few words about the companion feeling of indignation.

As shame is a safeguard against evil in oneself, so indignation serves to check evil in others. It may be described as that sense of poetic justice, which dislikes to see the wicked or base man triumphant. It is thus a rudimentary form of distributive justice, of which we shall have to speak presently, just as shame is a rudimentary form of temperance. This is why the ancients deified this feeling under the title of the goddess Nemesis. But they were wrong in attaching it to mere prosperity, without question of desert. Perhaps they reasoned intuitively that there were few men who could bear great prosperity without being debased or perverted by it. Protagoras took a better view when he represented shame and justice, by which no doubt he meant this feeling of righteous indignation, as bestowed upon all men, more or less, by Zeus, in order that they might serve as the common bonds of society and as the foundation of the art of statecraft. Certainly without them combination would be impossible among beings devoid of virtue, as the mass of men are.

To represent 'nemesis' as resentment at anything but

undeserved success would be to confound it with its excess, which is envy. Envy is a kind of pain at the sight of prosperity, and is felt chiefly against equals or those whom one takes to be such. The good man will have his sense of justice outraged at the prosperity of the unworthy, but the prosperity of another good man will cause him no pain—nay, he will have reason for sympathetic rejoicing, as thinking that the same may happen to him, which has happened to his like.

The defect of the feeling in question is, strictly speaking, the absence of any pain at undeserved prosperity. When positive pleasure takes the place of the absence of pain, we have the state of mind which I denominated 'delight in evil,' arising out of a sympathy with vice. You will not, I hope, after what I said before, confound this feeling with the spitefulness which delights in the evils which happen to others, even when they are undeserved. That is only another side of the same temperament which gives rise to envy. They are both inchoate forms of injustice.

EUDEMUS. If pain even at deserved success is thus accompanied by pleasure at undeserved misfortune, does it follow that the pain at undeserved success, which constitutes righteous indignation, will be accompanied by pleasure at deserved misfortune?

ARISTOTLE. Yes, and also by the pain at undeserved misfortune, which is commonly called 'pity,' and by pleasure at deserved success, as I explained before. All these feelings spring from the same desire for the proportionment of external goods to merit.

NICOMACHUS. Is that desire reasonable, father? Why should the presence of the higher goods constitute any claim to the possession of the lower?

ARISTOTLE. Without seeking to justify the feeling, my son, we may recognise its importance to society. When

nature has any object much at heart, she seldom entrusts it to man's reason. But to continue, or rather to conclude. Indignation, like shame, is not a virtue, because it is a feeling rather than a state, and also because it is only called for on the hypothesis of the triumph of evil. A permanent state either of shame at oneself or of indignation at others would certainly not point to a perfect condition of things.

THEOPHRASTUS. Ought we not to distinguish between two kinds of shame, the shame that deters from evil and the shame that follows evil and can only act as a deterrent against a second trespass? I don't quite see why modesty should not be considered as a permanent state of the former sort of shame. By a 'permanent state' I understand you to mean no more than the permanent possibility of the recurrence of a feeling when occasion calls for it.

ARISTOTLE. Perhaps it is a state, but it is not a state of purpose, or in any way under the control of the will, and that is fatal to calling it a virtue.

EUDEMUS. I have been doubting in my own mind for a long time whether this objection does not lie against the social virtues as well as against shame and indignation. Do they not fall rather under the head of natural endowment than of acquired habit? They certainly seem like gifts and graces of nature.

ARISTOTLE. Nature undoubtedly plays an important part in them, but so she does in virtue generally. The fact however that these social qualities can be cultivated proves that they are to some extent under the control of the will, and to that extent they are virtues in the full sense of the term and satisfy our definition.

LECTURE XXVII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, V. 1]

JUSTICE IN GENERAL: ITS RELATION TO VIRTUE: A CLASSIFICATION OF CONSTITUTIONS

We come now to the queen of virtues—Justice—to which we must pay the homage of a longer treatment than we have accorded to any of the rest. We shall have to determine what is its sphere of action, in what way it is a mean, and between what things the just, which is the outcome of justice, is a mean. In treating of justice we shall at the same time be treating of injustice.

In discussing this subject let us follow our usual method of starting from current conceptions. It is better to build on other men's thoughts than to attempt to make a clean sweep of everything and begin again on one's own account. What is wrong in the initial assumptions can be corrected by enlarged experience and deeper examination, but one man is as likely to build a city by his unaided exertions as he is to construct a philosophy. It is not the business of the one to reject the work of the many, but rather to show, where necessary, how their thought has been set wrong by some warp of passion or some accident of a narrow experience.

If you were to ask the first man you met 'What is justice?', he would probably give you some such account as this—'Justice is that sort of state in consequence of which men are able to do what is just, and in consequence of which they deal justly, and wish for what is just.' Similarly, injustice would be described as 'a state in consequence of which men act unjustly, and wish for what is unjust.' Let us then adopt these popular conceptions as our working basis.

NICOMACHUS. But surely, father, this is merely defining a thing by itself, and can throw no light on the subject.

ARISTOTLE. Not quite so, my son. It is defining the immaterial state by its realisations in act. We know just conduct, when we see it, better than we know what justice is in the abstract; and so something is gained by explaining the latter by the former. Moreover, I am crediting the popular mind with an instinctive appreciation of the idea that it need not concern itself with any justice which fails to realise itself in act.

You will observe also that justice is regarded as issuing only in just conduct. This points to the difference between a moral state, like justice, and a rational power, such as an art or science.

Powers may be divided into irrational and rational. An irrational power, like heat, has only one effect, namely, to produce warmth: it cannot produce its contrary, cold. But a rational power, like the art of the physician, can produce sickness as well as health. The reason of this is that it is an affair of knowledge, and the knowledge of a thing involves the knowledge of its opposite. Thus, if you know a triangle to be a three-sided figure, you know also what is not a triangle; and again, if you know what is straight, you cannot fail to know what is crooked. Now, if justice were a power or faculty involving mere knowledge,

it could issue in unjust conduct as easily as in just, and the paradox of Socrates would command assent, that the just man must also be a good thief.

Justice however is not a power, but a habit or state ; and a habit or state is so far like an irrational power that it is not concerned with contraries. For instance, the habit of health produces healthy results alone, but not the opposite. If you are in a state of health, you have a healthy appetite and walk with a healthy gait : it requires illness to produce the opposite symptoms. And what is true of the health of the body is true also of the health of the soul. Justice will enable a man to act justly, and it will have that effect alone. So far then is the just man from being a good thief that it is impossible for him to be a thief at all.

In showing how a state does not issue in contrary effects, I chose the instance of a bodily state, because I wanted you to understand that what I was saying is true of all states. But though not more true, the same thing is, if possible, more evident in the case of moral states, which involve feeling. The thing which makes it so peculiarly impossible for the just man to be a thief is that he will never wish to be a thief. Hence the significance of adding the words 'and wish for what is just.' Mere knowledge and self-interest might lead a man to deal justly even against his wish, but he will not be just, unless he wishes to deal justly.

But, while between the just man and the unjust there yawns this gulf of feeling, yet, as I said before, in treating of justice we shall at the same time be treating of injustice. For though a state is not concerned with opposites, yet a state, like other things, may be known from its opposite. There is also another way in which a state may be known indirectly, and that is from its material conditions. If any one understands what the trainer calls a good habit of

body, he will also understand a bad habit of body, and will know the former from its conditions and them from it. Let us say that a good habit of body consists in firmness of flesh, then a bad habit of body will consist in flabbiness, and that which produces firmness of flesh will be conducive to a good habit of body. By 'firmness of flesh' I mean that the parts are in close contact with one another, and by 'flabbiness' that they are further apart.

Justice is an ambiguous term ; and when one of a pair of contrary terms is ambiguous, it follows as a general rule that the other is ambiguous also. I say 'as a general rule,' because this is not always the case. Thus the word which means 'to love' is used also in our language in the sense of 'to kiss,' but the word 'to hate' has nothing to correspond to this meaning. In the case of 'justice,' however, the rule holds good, and the ambiguity of justice is reflected in its contrary 'injustice.' This ambiguity belongs to the kind that is most effective and misleading. For it attaches itself to an abstract and not to a concrete name. In the latter case we may be said not to have a real ambiguity at all, but rather two wholly different words, which happen to coincide in appearance. There is no real danger of deception, so long as we have the physical form of the object to fall back upon. Thus the word 'key' is used both for the collar-bone and for the instrument with which we lock a door. But a double meaning like this is rather material for a play upon words than a serious source of confusion of thought. Where a pun is possible, there is little danger of fallacy. King Philip did not expect the physician who was attending him for a broken collar-bone to be deceived, when he said, in reply to his rapacious requests, 'Take as much as you want, for you have the key.'

Even in the case of abstract terms, ambiguity is not very likely to deceive when the difference of meaning is a wide

and clearly-marked one. For the fog which might arise from identity of name can at once be dispelled by the difference of definition. The trouble begins when two or more meanings of the same word run into one another, so that the things denoted by the names have really something in common. This common something may be regarded as constituting a common definition, so that it may be maintained that there is really no equivocation at all. But there *is* an equivocation, and a very serious one, if two different wholes are mistaken for one another because of a partial identity. Bearing in mind this danger, we will attempt to discriminate carefully between the different senses in which the words with which we are at present concerned are employed.

We will begin with the word 'unjust.'

There is a sense in which the law-breaker is called 'unjust.' In this sense the term 'unjust' is equivalent to 'unrighteous' or 'wicked.'

There is also a sense in which the man who tries to get any unfair advantage over you is called 'unjust.' Such then being the meanings of 'unjust,' we may infer that the 'just' man is in one sense the law-abiding and law-observing man and in another the man who is fair in his dealings. 'The just' also in the way of conduct will be the lawful and the fair, while the unjust will be the unlawful and the unfair.

Now, since the unjust man, in the narrower sense of the term, strives to get an advantage over others, and to obtain a larger share of something for himself, it is evident that he will be concerned with goods: but still not with all goods. With what goods then? Only with those which come within the range of good and evil fortune. And these are external goods. Goods of this kind have a necessary element of selfishness about them. If *A* has so much gold

or silver or land, *B* cannot possibly have it too. But it is not so with virtue and knowledge. For one man to possess them is a help and not a hindrance to their possession by another. They are like light, that can be imparted without being diminished. It is for these goods, my son, and you others who do me the honour to attend my teaching, that I would fain have you strive. You will never be called unfair or unjust because you seek to have the advantage here; and you may pray to possess these goods without your prayers having the taint of cupidity. As for the rest, take them, if they fall lawfully to you, but do not go out of your way to seek them, and do not pray for them: for you do not know whether you are praying for good or evil. I will not go the length that some do of saying that they are not good at all, for a thing must be judged by its proper use. But this I do say, that a man cannot be sure whether they are good for him. Instead therefore of clamouring to the Gods for external goods, as the mass of men do, our prayer should be that things which are good in themselves may be good for us, which they will be, if we are possessed of perfect virtue: but when it comes to a matter of choice, we should choose what our own virtue can bear.

We have said that the unjust man seeks the greater share of goods for himself, and have explained what kind of goods. With regard to evils the case is, of course, reversed. Therein he seeks a less share for himself. But inasmuch as the lesser evil is, comparatively speaking, good, we still talk of him as trying to get an advantage over others. In either case he displays his unfairness, or, as I had better call it now, his inequality: for the unequal is a generic term which embraces the two species of more and less.

In the other and wider sense of the term we found that

the law-breaker was unjust and the observer of law just, whence it is evident that all that is prescribed by law is in a sense just. I say 'in a sense,' because legal enactments do not always correspond with natural justice. In a normal constitution, which aims at the good of all, they do, but if the constitution be deflected from the normal type, and based on class-interests, they do not. But whatever the type of constitution may be, the laws have their say on all subjects in accordance with the particular aim of that constitution, and whatever they prescribe passes within that community for just. In so far as the legal coincides with the natural, it not only passes for, but also is just. So that in one sense of the term we give the name 'just' to all that tends to produce and preserve for the body politic happiness and its constituents. By 'the constituents of happiness' I mean external and bodily goods in all their different forms, but also, and more particularly, virtue. If you look at what law ordains, you will find that it is conduct in accordance with the various virtues. Not to leave the ranks or fly or throw away one's arms—what is this but the behaviour of the brave man? Not to commit adultery or indulge in wanton outrage—what is this but the behaviour of the temperate man? Not to strike or revile another—what is this again but the behaviour of the gentle man? In short, run through the virtues with their contrary vices, and you will find law busy with them all, bidding some things and forbidding others, with more or less of success in attaining the naturally right, according as its aim is well-advised or hasty and ill-directed. Justice then in this sense is, when taken at its best, coextensive with perfect virtue. But though coextensive with it, it is not coincident in meaning. There is a difference of respect between the two.

Perfect virtue is the best state of mind viewed in

itself; justice is the same thing viewed in its effect upon others.

And this is perhaps why justice is held to be the highest of virtues, and why we have Euripides in his *Melanippe the Wise* singing of the 'far-gleaming, golden face of Justice,' and saying—

'Nor evening star nor morning star so fair.'

To the same effect is the line of *Theognis* which has passed into a proverb—

'Justice contains all virtues rolled in one.'

What gives its peculiar excellence to this one virtue is the fact that it is the exercise of perfect virtue generally. And this exercise moreover is of the most perfect kind: for the man who possesses justice is able to exercise virtue towards another and not only towards himself. There are many who get so far as to exercise virtue towards themselves and their own family, but who fail in their relations to outsiders. Hence the force of the maxim of Bias, 'Government will show the man,' or, as Sophocles has less pithily put it—

'For who can know the mind of any man,
Or e'er his thought and spirit be made clear
By exercise of law and government!'

You see the ruler as such stands in social relations to his fellow-men.

It is this social aspect of justice also which accounts for the fact that it alone, of all virtues, is held to be another's good. For the just man does what is for the interest of another, whether of the ruler or of his fellow-citizen. Now the worst of men is undoubtedly he who acts viciously both towards himself and towards his friends: but the best is not he who displays virtue towards himself, but he who does so towards his neighbour: for this is no easy matter.

Justice, then, in the sense in which we have now been

speaking of it, is not a part of virtue, but rather the whole of virtue, nor is its opposite, injustice, a part of vice, but rather the whole of vice. But still there is a difference of conception, as I explained to you, between virtue and justice. The best state of mind, regarded simply as a state, is virtue ; regarded in its relation to others, it is justice.

NICOMACHUS. I can understand now, father, how you came to pass over justice in your enumeration of the moral virtues. You were treating of it all the time you were treating of them.

ARISTOTLE. In one sense I was, but in another sense I was not. In our next lecture it will be my business to show you that there is a particular virtue of justice which may be regarded as coordinate with the rest of the moral virtues. But it required so much unravelling to get this sense disentangled from the other, that I preferred to preserve the whole subject for independent treatment. Its dignity at the same time seemed to justify me in pursuing this course.

THEOPHRASTUS. You spoke in the course of your lecture of a 'normal constitution' and of 'a constitution deflected from the normal type.' I should be glad of a little enlightenment on that point, as the language is new to me.

ARISTOTLE. I am afraid I was anticipating things a little there. It is a point which I am accustomed to explain when we reach that part of the course which deals with Politics proper and not with the subsidiary science of Ethics. But, as I have had occasion to introduce the terms you refer to, I may as well give you the explanation of them also. You will be prepared for the subject then when we come to deal with it later.

Any government which aims at the common good I call a normal government ; any government which aims at the good of the rulers, as apart from that of the community,

is despotic, and a deviation from the normal type. Now governments may be divided into three kinds, according to the number of the governing body. For either there must be one ruler or more than one; and if there be more than one, we may divide roughly into the few and the many. Thus we have the government of the one, the government of the few, and the government of the many. When the governing body, whatever its number may be, aims at the good of all, the government is of the normal type; when it ceases to do so, and aims only at its own, it becomes a perverted type or 'aberration.' I shall do no more now than give you the names of the three normal forms with their corresponding aberrations. Whatever else there may be to say must be left to be said later.

Normal forms	Aberrations
(1) Kingdom	Tyranny.
(2) Aristocracy	Oligarchy.
(3) Commonwealth	Democracy.

THEOPHRASTUS. Just one point more, please, before you quit the subject. How about a government like that of Sparta, in which the power is pretty equally distributed between different orders in the State? There seems to be no room for such a government in this division, either among the normal or perverted forms.

ARISTOTLE. That is a mixed government, and ours is a division of pure governments. We ought to have begun by dividing governments into pure and mixed.

NICOMACHUS. What you said about prayer, father, reminded me of something which you told me before about the prayer of Socrates.

ARISTOTLE. It stands recorded at the end of the *Phaedrus*. I daresay Theophrastus could quote the words for us.

THEOPHRASTUS. 'Kind Pan, and all ye other gods who

dwell in this place, grant me that I may become fair in the inner man, and that what I have without may be such as to help and not hinder that which is within. As to my store of gold, may it be such as none but the temperate could plunder from me.'

ARISTOTLE. That's it, Theophrastus. And remember that to quote the sentiments of Socrates is the same thing as to record his life, which is a thing that can be said of few.

EUDEMUS. You said that it was easier to practise virtue towards oneself than towards others. I would be glad to know more precisely what you meant by that.

ARISTOTLE. I meant that virtues like courage and temperance, with the approximate states of endurance and self-restraint, have a more obvious bearing upon the good of the individual than others which are more strictly social; and therefore they are more likely to recommend themselves on the ground of self-interest. But this point would not bear to be pressed. For you know that I would not admit even courage and temperance to be virtues in the true sense until they were practised from a higher motive. I was thinking also, when I added a reference to one's own family, of how affection facilitates virtue. A brigand may possess all the domestic virtues, and be regarded as a pattern husband and parent within the bosom of his own family, though a chance acquaintance might take a less favourable view of his character.

THEOPHRASTUS. In what I may call your praise of justice at the end of the discourse, you seemed to approve of the saying that it is another's good.

ARISTOTLE. It is another's good, but this does not prevent its being one's own good also.

THEOPHRASTUS. But do not the Sophists and the men of the world use this very phrase as a sneer at justice altogether?

ARISTOTLE. They do, and therein they display their ignorance. If they confined their disdain indeed to the want of spirit or want of intelligence of the man who meekly practises a so-called 'justice,' which is merely the interest of his ruler, there might be something in what they say. But when they proceed to point their sarcasms against a deliberate devotion to the good of the commonwealth, they show that they do not understand what is the highest thing in man regarded as a social being. It is just because he is able to recognise the rights of others that he is a civilised human being instead of a dangerous beast of prey. Justice in its developed form is the outcome of the social union: but the capacity for justice is the basis upon which society is built.

LECTURE XXVIII

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, V. 2, 3]

JUSTICE IN PARTICULAR — EVIDENCE FOR ITS EXISTENCE: ITS SUBDIVISIONS: DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

We spoke last time of justice in the wide and general sense of the term in which it is coextensive with virtue, and injustice with vice. To-day we must speak of it in the narrower sense, in which justice is itself a particular kind of virtue and injustice a particular kind of vice. Before however proceeding to discuss the nature of a thing, it is well to make sure that there is such a thing in existence. So my first business this morning must be to give you some ground for believing that there are a justice and injustice in a particular sense. Here then is the first presumption I have to offer you in favour of the point—

(1) Other vices do not involve the attempt to overreach another, nor does this attempt involve them.

When a man throws away his shield owing to cowardice, or is led by ill-temper into abusing another, or fails to help his friend with his purse because of his illiberality, he commits injustice only in the wide and general sense that his action is not in accordance with virtue: but there is no attempt here to overreach one's neighbour. But, on the

safety or whatever common name would embrace all these, and its motive is the pleasure that is derived from gain, whereas the genus is concerned with the whole sphere of vice.

These considerations warrant us in assuming that there is such a thing as justice in a particular sense, in which it is coordinate with the other virtues, so that we may go on now to inquire into its nature. We distinguished the unjust, if you remember, into the unlawful and the unfair, and the just into the lawful and the fair. Corresponding with the unlawful is that wide sense of injustice which was treated of in our last lecture. But just as the unfair as a part is comprised in the unlawful as a whole (for the unfair is always unlawful, but there are other kinds of the unlawful as well as the unfair), so now we find that there is an unjust and an injustice which stand to those previously dealt with in the relation of part to whole; and in like manner also a justice. It is to justice and injustice in this sense that we must now confine our attention, and we may dismiss from our minds the meaning of the terms in which the one may be defined as 'the employment of virtue generally towards another,' and the other as 'the employment of vice generally towards another.' The conduct also which is denominated just or unjust in the wide sense of the terms need give us no further trouble. For the acts which result from virtue as a whole coincide pretty fairly with the prescriptions of law: since law, as we have seen already, commands us to exhibit every virtue in our lives, and forbids each vice. And again the causes which produce virtue as a whole are to be found in the enactments of law which relate to the education of a man as a citizen. Whether the education of the individual as such, which makes him a good man in the absolute sense, and not merely a good citizen,

belongs also to the science of statecraft, or requires some more interior and recondite process, is a question which may be reserved for future discussion. But, as I said, we must now dismiss from our minds the wide sense of justice altogether, and consider it only as a particular virtue.

Society may be considered, metaphorically of course, as a joint-stock company, consisting of diverse individuals, differing in all sorts of respects, some contributing as many as a hundred shares, some only one. Nevertheless, ideally considered, it is an equilibrium: no one has more than he ought.

Now we may regard each individual—

- (1) in relation to the whole;
- (2) in relation to every other individual.

If, in relation to the whole, we ask 'What is his dividend?' the best answer that can be given is this—

'As *A*'s share of work : *B*'s :: *A*'s dividend : *B*'s.'

The dividend may be payable in honour or in money, or in whatever else has to be divided among the members of the commonwealth, and in which therefore it is possible for each to obtain a fair or an unfair share. To determine this proportion is the task of Distributive Justice, which necessarily takes account of the worth of the individual.

If again, regarding individuals in relation to one another, we ask 'How are we to preserve their relative proportions?' the answer is 'By righting the balance when it has been set wrong.' This is the task of Corrective Justice, which takes no account of the worth of the individual, but looks only at the extent to which he has disturbed the equilibrium.

You see then that Justice is divided into the two main heads of Distributive and Corrective.

Corrective justice has to do, as I have said, with the relations into which individuals are brought to one another in the social union. Now individuals are brought into relation to one another in all sorts of ways, which, for the sake of a comprehensive term, we will call 'dealings.' Some of these dealings are voluntary and some involuntary, and corrective justice may be applied to either, so that you may consider that there are two kinds, corresponding roughly to civil and criminal procedure in the law courts.

As instances of voluntary dealings you may take selling, buying, money-lending, bail, letting, deposit, hiring. We call these 'voluntary,' because they are entered into with the consent of both parties.

The involuntary, to which the consent of one of the two parties is lacking, may be further subdivided into 'fraudulent,' as theft, adultery, witchcraft, procuring, enticement of slaves, killing by stealth, perjury; and 'violent,' as outrage, imprisonment, murder, rape, mutilation, abuse, insult.

Now, before I plunge further into a dissertation which promises to be somewhat abstract, I think I will give both you and myself a little breathing-space. Meanwhile some of you had better disburden yourselves of the questions, and I daresay objections, with which I am sure you are bursting.

THEOPHRASTUS. Is there any real difference between the first and the third argument by which you established the existence of particular justice? In the first you seemed to be saying—

Overreaching is not referable to any other vice.

∴ It must be assigned to injustice.

In the third—

Dishonest gain is not referable to any other vice.

∴ It must be assigned to injustice.

Is there a difference between 'overreaching' and 'dishonest gain'?

ARISTOTLE. Candidly, there is no very profound difference between the two. I seem to have dressed up a voter to go twice to the poll, which comes under the head of 'fraudulent dealing.' You may run the two arguments into one, if you like.

THEOPHRASTUS. Another point that I want to know about is whether dishonest gain might not be referred to illiberality, as a taking from wrong sources. We have the highwayman and the brigand, who are not celebrated for justice, figuring in our list of illiberal characters.

ARISTOTLE. I thought that point would not escape you. My own mind misgave me about it as I was speaking. But I would rather, if need be, explain or retract something of what I said before than give up what I am maintaining now. The highwayman and the brigand resemble the illiberal in taking from wrong sources. But they are illiberal and something more. For perhaps we ought to have made illiberality pure and simple stop short of crime.

THEOPHRASTUS. As no one else seems to have a question forthcoming, I will venture to put another. Both in the last lecture and in this you have been speaking of law as something that penetrates into every department of life and prescribes all conduct. Now here in Athens people are apt to pride themselves on not having their actions too much hampered by law. I know that the case is different in Sparta. But is there anywhere a law which has the all-pervading moral force which you assign to it?

ARISTOTLE. If there is not, there ought to be. I confess that I am in the habit of idealising law as the utterance of reason apart from passion. But in thinking of the universality of law you must not confine your ideas to

written mandates. Law, after all, is only custom crystallized. There are a great many things ordained and forbidden by custom quite as effectively as if they were inscribed in the statute-book.

Now let us continue the thread of our discourse, and treat of particular justice in its specific forms, of which I have already given you a brief sketch.

We described the unjust man as unfair or unequal, and what is true of the unjust character is true also of the unjust in conduct. Now the unequal may be either too much or too little, and any course of action which admits of too much and too little admits also of a mean. It is evident then that the unequal admits of a mean, and this mean is the equal. We have proved then that, if the unjust is unequal, it follows that the just is equal.

NICOMACHUS. Does not that follow without proof, father?

ARISTOTLE. Do you mean as an immediate inference in this way—

The unjust is unequal.
∴ The just is equal.

NICOMACHUS. Yes, that conclusion seems inevitable.

ARISTOTLE. And yet it does not follow at all, any more than if I were to lay down that

The ugly is hard,

it would follow that

The beautiful is easy.

For the beautiful may be hard too. And, generally, you are never warranted in drawing an inference in this shape—

All not-*A* is not-*B*.
∴ All *A* is *B*.

The conclusion may be true, as in this case we have shown that it is, but it does not follow from the premiss. Logically then we were bound to prove our point, but practically proof was quite superfluous. I mean that everybody

admits the just to be equal: the only thing they ever dispute about is the kind of equality involved in justice.

THEOPHRASTUS. I do not wish to dispute the conclusion, but for the life of me I cannot see how we have proved it. You told us that the equal was a mean of the unequal, and from this you drew the conclusion that the just was equal. Do we not need the further assumption that the just is a mean of the unjust or unequal?

ARISTOTLE. Certainly we do. The proposition was present to my mind, and so I took for granted that it was present to yours. This is what renders the proof of the obvious so difficult as a logical exercise. The mind is impatient of links which it is in the habit of slurring over. Fully expressed, the reasoning which I wished to convey to you runs thus—

The equal is a mean of the unequal.

But the just is this mean of the unequal.

∴ The just is equal.

EUDEMUS. Would it not be better to prove that the just is a mean from the idea of its equality than to prove its equality from the assumption that it is a mean?

ARISTOTLE. Perhaps so: but as we began with the latter, we will stick to it. Plainly we cannot prove both without a regular see-saw.

Now that we have tided over that difficulty, let us go on.

We have proved that the just is equal. But to say that it is equal is to say that it involves a relation; for equality is a relation which implies two things at least. Not only then is the just a mean, as we assume it to be, and equal, as we prove it, but it is also relative. It is beginning therefore to seem rather complex. As a mean it must be a mean between some things. These things are many, but may be summed up under the two heads of too much and too little. Then, as being equal, it implies two things

at the least. And further, as being just, it must be just for some persons. Let us look at it however in its simplest form, taking account only of what cannot be neglected. The idea of the just, then, at the very least, involves four terms, two for the persons and two for the things. And whatever amount of equality or inequality there is between the persons, there must be the same between the things, and vice versa. If the persons are not equal, neither must the things be, or else there will be no justice ; indeed the allotment of unequal shares to equals or of equal shares to unequals is the source of all quarrelling and fighting.

That it is not mere equality, but proportional equality, that is involved in justice, is further evident from the notion of 'worth.' People are agreed that goods should be distributed according to worth, and that, if *A* is worth twice as much as *B*, he should receive twice as much as *B*. But what the standard of worth ought to be is the point upon which they differ. The democrats maintain it is freedom, and that all free citizens ought to share alike. Hence the important part that the ballot plays in a democratical state, as that is a recognition of the essential equality of the individuals constituting it, in so far, that is, as they are free. The oligarchs, on the other hand, think that wealth is the standard of worth, and are in favour of a property-qualification. Others go in for a standard of birth, and uphold the hereditary principle ; while the aristocrats, in the proper sense of the term, think that the real standard is virtue. But however different their views may be, they are all agreed in recognising that there must be some standard, and therefore that the equality involved in justice is proportional. If Achilles is worth twice as much as Ajax, whether on the score of wealth, nobility, or virtue, then the honour assigned to Achilles ought to be twice as great as that assigned to Ajax. Suppose we represent Achilles by

100 and his honour by 10, then Ajax will stand for 50 and his honour for 5; so that the proportion between the persons and their shares in the distribution will run thus—

As 100 : 50 :: 10 : 5.

Here we have a real equality, though you might not at first sight think it. For what I have just given you amounts to this—

2 = 2.

This is what is meant by saying that proportion is an equality of ratios.

EUDEMUS. Pardon my interrupting you, master. But does not the democrat deny that there is any proportion at all about justice?

ARISTOTLE. No, he only alters the terms by fixing the standard at freedom, which is a thing that does not admit of degrees. Considering Ajax, because he is as free as Achilles, to be his equal in all respects, he reads the proportion thus—

As 100 : 100 :: 10 : 10,

which amounts to saying—

1 = 1.

Therefore, even though we deny the democrat's standard, let us still claim him as an adherent of the great principle of proportional equality, which is not only the bond of cohesion among states, but is also that which serves to keep the stars in their courses.

THEOPHRASTUS. The thing seems delightfully simple and easy when you express it in abstract numbers in which the units are all equal. But justice would really have to do with numerable things—concrete numbers, if I may so call them—where the units themselves may vary. Would there not be difficulties of detail with regard to these?

Suppose that in the distribution of spoil Achilles were to be honoured with a hundred lean kine and Ajax with fifty fat ones, while it was still recognised that the services of the former to the Greeks were twice as great as those of Ajax, might not Achilles have reason to sulk in spite of the numerical justice that was done to him? And then again how is any one to know that one man *is* worth twice as much as another?

ARISTOTLE. Far be it from me to deny that the problem is a hard one. So hard indeed is it that none can solve it fully but God, who alone can gauge the true worth of any man. But it is something to point out what the problem is. At present we are concerned only with the broad general principle, which is roughly applicable to numerable things as well as to numbers proper. Difficulties of detail can sometimes be got over by a change in the units, or things may be left to right themselves on the average. If Achilles knew that there was no design to give him the lean kine, he would not sulk, but would hope for better luck next time.

But to proceed.

Proportion is either continuous or discrete.

Of discrete proportion we have had examples already, and it is manifest that it involves four terms. But continuous proportion really does so too. Here is an instance of what I mean by continuous proportion—

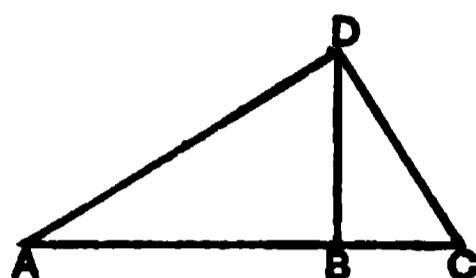
$$8 : 4 : 2.$$

There are four terms here, because the middle one is used twice. We may express the same meaning in this way—

$$\text{As } 8 : 4 :: 4 : 2.$$

If the terms of our proportion are lines, there may be only three visible to the eye, while there are four present to

the mind. Thus in a right-angled triangle if a perpendicular be drawn from the right angle to the base, it could be shown that this perpendicular is a mean proportional between



the segments of the base. The proportion here would be continuous, but there would really be four terms—

As $AB : BD :: BD : BC$.

Justice then resembles any other proportion in the fact of having four terms, the ratio between the persons being the same as that between the things.

Let A and B be two persons, C and D two things. Then

As $A : B :: C : D$.

Now mathematicians will tell you that you may take the terms alternately, thus

As $A : C :: B : D$.

And also that if you add together the two terms in each ratio, you will get a ratio which is the same as the original one. We may therefore say that

As $A : B :: A+C : B+D$,

or, translating it into the concrete—

As Achilles : Ajax :: Achilles honoured : Ajax honoured.

This is the kind of composition which is effected by the distribution, and when the terms are thus put together, it is justly performed. The composition then of A with C and of B with D is what constitutes the just in distribution,

and this just is a mean, being proportional, whereas the unjust is what violates proportion.

The proportion of which we have been speaking is what mathematicians call 'geometrical proportion.' It is only in this kind that the composition can be effected, in which the whole stands to the whole as the terms of either of the original ratios stood to one another.

NICOMACHUS. What other kind of proportion is there, father, besides geometrical proportion?

ARISTOTLE. There is also what is called 'arithmetical proportion,' in which *B* exceeds *A* by as much as *D* exceeds *C*. Thus 4 bears to 6 the same arithmetical relation that 10 bears to 12. The larger term however may come first, so that we ought rather to say 'in which *B* is as much larger or smaller than *A* as *D* is larger or smaller than *C*.' Any pairs of numbers, however remote, may be said to be in arithmetical proportion to one another, when the terms thus differ from one another by the same amount. If you fill up the gap between them by supplying means, you then get such a series as that of which we spoke before under the name of an 'arithmetical progression.' In the instance which I selected there is only one mean to be supplied, namely 8, and the series runs thus—

4, 6, 8, 10, 12, &c.

NICOMACHUS. Is the proportion required by justice continuous or discrete?

ARISTOTLE. Discrete of course. How could you have one term standing for a person and for a thing?

As Achilles : Ajax :: the honour of one : the honour of the other.

It would be impossible to have one and the same term standing for Ajax and for the honour of Achilles.

NICOMACHUS. Of course it would. But I did not see the thing so plainly when I put the question.

ARISTOTLE. Well, I hope you all see plainly enough now what is meant by saying that the just in distribution is that which observes proportion and the unjust that which violates it. If the composition of which we have spoken be not rightly effected, one of the two wholes is made larger than it ought to be, and the other smaller, so that the mean, which proportion would have given, is lost sight of. That this is true in fact as well as in theory is borne out by the testimony of language. For the man who commits injustice is said to 'take advantage of' another, or to 'aggrandise' himself at another's expense. As I explained before, we may use the same expressions, even when he seeks to have less of an evil. There is no essential difference between doing that and seeking to have more of a good. For the lesser evil is more choiceworthy than the greater, and all that is choiceworthy is in a way good, so that the more choiceworthy is the greater good.

Let so much then suffice for Distributive Justice.

LECTURE XXIX

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, V. 4, 5, §§ 1-16]

CORRECTIVE JUSTICE: CRITICISM OF THE IDEA OF
RETALIATION: PROPORTIONAL RECIPROCITY THE
BOND OF UNION IN STATES: FUNCTION OF
MONEY

THE kind of justice of which we have to speak to-day is Corrective Justice, which finds its sphere in the dealings of man with man, whether of the voluntary or of the involuntary kind. This is a distinct species altogether from the Distributive Justice of which we treated in our last lecture.

The distributively just, as we saw, was concerned with the apportionment of some common stock among the members of a society. It took into account the worth of the members, and so proceeded on the principle of geometrical proportion. If the contributions of one man to the common fund were greater than those of another, it was its business to see that his receipts were greater in the same proportion. Conversely the unjust, which was the opposite of this, was that which violated proportion.

Now we must abandon this idea of geometrical equality and adopt in its stead the more ordinary notion of arithmetical equality. It will be a question of quantity now and

not of quality. For the just in dealings is something equal, and the unjust something unequal, but not according to geometrical, but according to arithmetical proportion. What I mean is this. The moral character of the disturber of the equilibrium does not enter into the problem of distributive justice, which looks only at the amount of the disturbance. In the eye of the law it makes no difference whether it is a philanthropist who has robbed a scamp of his purse or a scamp who has robbed a philanthropist, nor do we take into account the moral character of the adulterer in assessing the damages for the injured husband. All that the law looks to is the difference resulting from the injury. It treats the persons as equal, if the one commits and the other suffers an injury, or if the one inflicts and the other has received a hurt.

Of course I do not mean that all persons are equal, because I say that the law treats them as being so. The inequalities among human beings are greater than those among any other species of animal: nevertheless, they are all equal before the law. Why? Because the law recognises the equal right of every one to enjoy undisturbed that share of good, whether in the way of wealth, enjoyment, or reputation, which has fallen to his lot, justly it is assumed, through the agencies of distribution.

The law says to the philanthropist and the scamp, 'I will regard you both as x .' We have then an equation, or rather an identity—

$$x = x.$$

Then, if the philanthropist beats or kills the scamp, or vice versa, we may consider that the philanthropist or the scamp, whichever it may be, has scored one. So that the equation is now disturbed. We have $x + 1$ on one side as against $x - 1$ on the other. At this point the law steps in to correct the inequality. It transfers the stolen purse

from the pocket of the thief to that of the original owner ; it gives the victim of an assault the satisfaction of seeing punishment inflicted on the aggressor ; in the case of murder it does away with the murderer, and so brings about the only equality it can, giving to the equation the value—

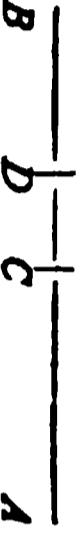
$$0 = 0.$$

In all these cases we may talk of the 'gain' to the injurer and the 'loss' to the injured, though the terms may not be very appropriate in the case of physical injury. Still, even in these cases we may see a certain fitness in the extended use of the terms, if we look at the assessment of damages. The punishment or fine inflicted on the injurer is regularly spoken of in our language as his 'loss,' and is sometimes payable in money ; and, when this is the case, the satisfaction to the injured person can quite strictly be called his gain. The loss and gain then on one side of the equation may be regarded as balancing a gain and loss on the other. We will not hesitate therefore to speak of the two extremes, the too much of the injurer and the too little of the injured, as their 'gain' and 'loss' respectively. They are, of course, too much and too little in an inverse way as regards good and evil—too much of good or too little of evil is gain ; too much of evil or too little of good is loss. Between these two extremes, which are represented by $x + 1$ and $x - 1$, we found that the equal, x , was a mean. We may say then that the just in the way of rectification is a mean between loss and gain.

Also, when people dispute about their rights they have recourse to the judge. But to have recourse to the judge is to seek for the just. For the idea of a judge is that he is the just incarnate. And they seek the judge as a mean—some people indeed call judges 'mediators,' implying that, if they obtain the mean, they will meet with just treatment.

The just then must be a mean, since the judge, who embodies it, is.

Since the mean is also the equal, it is the business of the judge to restore equality. Let me illustrate my meaning to the eye by means of a line.

 Let the line *AB* be divided into two unequal parts at *D*, of which *AD* is the greater. The man who has got *AD* has too much, and the man who has been left with only *BD* has too little. The judge therefore bisects the line at *C*, and taking away from *AD* the amount by which it exceeds the half, namely *CD*, adds it to *BD*. Then *BD* + *CD* make up one half the line, of which *AC*, which is all that is now left to the aggressor, is the other half. The two parties are now said to have their rights, because the line is bisected between them.

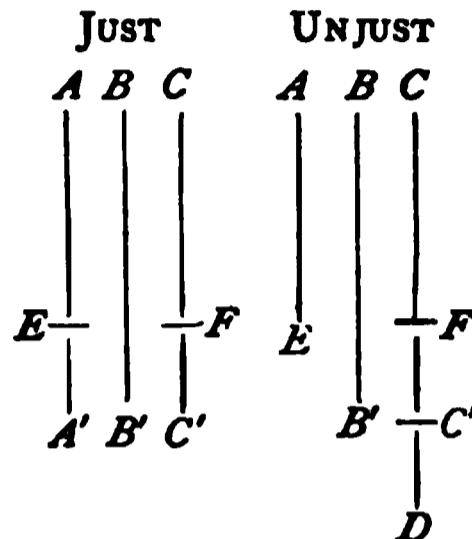
THEOPHRASTUS. Perhaps that's why the just is so-called, because it is just half.

ARISTOTLE. Well, if you like; I am not great at etymology. You may also regard the judge as an adjuster or equaliser. He finds, as I say, the equal, which is a mean between too much and too little according to arithmetical proportion. For if of two equals some quantity be taken from the one and added to the other, the second exceeds the first by two such quantities. For if it had been taken from the one without being added to the other, the second would have exceeded the first only by one such quantity. But, as it is, the second exceeds the mean by one, and the mean exceeds the thing subtracted from by one also. Now this is the essence of arithmetical proportion, in which the greater term exceeds the mean by the same amount whereby the mean exceeds the less. The mean therefore serves as a measure by which we can know how much to take from the greater and to add to the less.

Let us suppose that we have three equal lines, AA' , BB' , CC' , of which AA' is divided at the point E and CC' at the point F , so that EA' is equal to FC' . Now suppose that EA' be taken from AA' , and CC' be produced to D , so that $C'D$ shall be equal to EA' or FC' . We have now the state of things which we call unjust, because the two extremes AE and CD are unequal. CD , which is the greater extreme, exceeds AE , which is the less, by FC' plus $C'D$, or, in other words, by twice $C'D$, and therefore exceeds the mean, or equal, BB' , by $C'D$. Now, if we wish to restore equality, we can do so by measuring the mean BB' against the two extremes, taking away from the greater that by which it exceeds the mean, and adding to the less that by which the mean exceeds it. In this way we get back to the original state of equilibrium, which was a type of justice.

EUDEMUS. I can understand the terms 'loss' and 'gain' much better as applied to voluntary than to involuntary dealings.

ARISTOTLE. No doubt you can, since that is their primary and literal sense, and the other only a metaphorical one. When two persons come out of some voluntary transaction, such as buying or selling, the one with more than he had prior to entering into it and the other with less, we then speak of the one's gain and the other's loss in the strict sense of the terms. But when, on the other hand, they have each neither more nor less, but precisely the same value as before they dealt with one another, then we say that there is neither loss nor gain. You may compare this state to the mean between gain and loss in the transferred, and, as I admitted, slightly strained sense, in which we have been



using the terms. Gain, however, in voluntary transactions is not contrary to law, and so does not call for correction by law. In some states the law will not even interfere in the case of a breach of contract. The theory in such cases is that a transaction which was entered into on the basis of confidence between man and man had better be concluded on the same terms, and that the general withdrawal of confidence from the delinquent will prove a more effective, as well as more natural, penalty than any which could be inflicted by a judge.

EUDEMUS. I daresay if that theory were generally accepted, it would lead to a higher standard of honesty.

ARISTOTLE. It would be well if men could adopt some view which would put an end to gain altogether, even in the literal sense. For though in that sense it is not contrary to law, it is still contrary to justice. To try and get the better of your neighbour in a bargain is a mean act, to which a good man would not stoop. It does no good to society to transfer so much wealth from one of its members to another. This, however, is a sphere in which the good man acts as a law to himself. The gain which law undertakes to rectify is that which results from involuntary dealings, and the just which we have been considering is a mean between gain and loss of this kind, so that the two parties are in the same position relatively to one another before and after their dealing. All that has been said about it however can be applied by yourselves to matters in which the law grants impunity.

Now that we have arrived at our own conception of what constitutes the just, we are in a position to criticize the views of others.

Well, there is one view with which you are all of you well acquainted. It is one which is venerable for its antiquity. The Pythagoreans held that you should suffer what you do.

Retaliation, or the law of tit for tat, was their idea of justice, and their motto was 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' Now, Theophrastus, do you think that theory is satisfactory?

THEOPHRASTUS. Not if it were my one eye or my last tooth that somebody knocked out. In that case I should not think that equality had been restored until every tooth had been drawn from his head or both his eyes put out.

ARISTOTLE. You appear to hold as strong an opinion on the subject as the one-eyed Locrian did.

THEOPHRASTUS. To what are you referring?

ARISTOTLE. Why, you know that among the Locrians of the West over-legislation was discouraged. They were content with the code of their great lawgiver Zaleucus. If any one wished to propose a change in the law, he had to do so with a halter round his neck. If the law was approved—well and good; if not—the rope was tightened. Now one of their laws was that, if a man put out another's eye, he should have his own eye put out. Well, there was a man who had only one eye, and whose enemy had threatened to put that out. The one-eyed man thought that life would not be worth having without his cherished eye, and so plucked up courage to propose an alteration in the law, to the effect that whosoever should put out the eye of a one-eyed man should have both his own eyes put out. This measure was carried. It was the only bit of legislation that took place at Locri for two centuries.

EUDEMUS. But I suppose that the aim of the law was to effect a more complete retaliation.

ARISTOTLE. No doubt it was. Still the instance serves to show that we cannot accept the Pythagorean formula without some qualification.

NICOMACHUS. I should have thought, father, that if a man deliberately deprives another of sight and so diminishes the

value of life to him, he ought to be made to suffer even more pain than he has inflicted, for having been the aggressor.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, there is the question of aggression to be considered and also that of deliberation and purpose, of all of which a mere theory of retaliation takes no account. And yet this is what people claim as the justice of Rhadamanthys—

‘That he who does should suffer what he does,
Is just and right.’

So says Hesiod. But the idea will not stand examination. Try it for yourselves by applying it first to distributive and then to corrective justice. If a man has contributed to the welfare of the state by slaying a tyrant, how does the state apportion his reward?

THEOPHRASTUS. It would hardly seek to repay him in kind by relieving him, say, of his wife. Most probably it would erect a statue to him.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, and so pay him in proportionate honour.

Now take the case of corrective justice. If a man has committed adultery with his neighbour's wife, the remedy is not that his neighbour should commit adultery with his. No, the law imposes some penalty, different in kind, but judged to be proportionate to the wrong. Under the laws of Zaleucus, to whom I have just referred, the penalty was that the adulterer's eyes should be put out. Or again, suppose a magistrate has struck a civilian, would it be just that he should be struck back? And, on the other hand, if a civilian has struck a magistrate, would it be just that he should merely suffer the same in return?

THEOPHRASTUS. Did you not say that corrective justice took no account of personal merit?

ARISTOTLE. No more it does. But here a new element has been introduced into the problem. It is no longer a question between individuals who are on the same footing

for legal purposes, however unequal their merits in other respects may be. The majesty of the state has been outraged in the person of the magistrate, and requires to be vindicated by an exemplary punishment. To strike a magistrate is to strike a blow at the foundations of society. The citizen who is not in office may be the equal of the magistrate in his private capacity: but as against the magistrate in his official capacity he has no more equal rights than a child has against a parent, or a slave against a free-man.

We have shown then the unsatisfactoriness of the attempt to identify justice with mere retaliation. But with a necessary amendment we may recognise the truth in it, which generally underlies a widely-accepted doctrine. If we say that proportional reciprocity aptly expresses the justice which should underlie commercial and industrial relations, we shall not be far wrong. Indeed we may go further, and say that proportional reciprocity is the bond of union and permanence in a state.

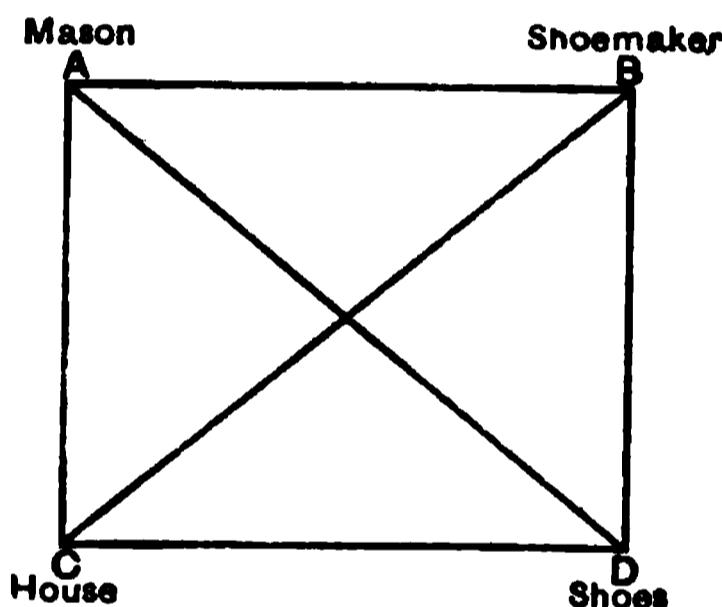
By 'reciprocity' I mean the requital both of evil for evil and of good for good. If the citizens are shut out from any legal redress for injuries, the state of things under which they live is a mere tyranny. If, on the other hand, they are debarred from a return of benefits, the conditions of healthy activity are equally absent. This is why a temple or statue of the Graces is put somewhere well in view in a city, in order that men may not neglect the charities of life. Here in Athens, as you know, before the entrance to the Acropolis, there are statues of the three Graces, draped, as the antique manner of representing them was. They have a peculiar interest for us, as they are by the hand of Socrates. There are three of them, because when a benefit has been bestowed, it should be returned, and then the receiver should begin anew: so the circle of kindness returns into

itself, and is ready to start on a fresh course. This is why the three are represented as linked together.

In commercial relations, of which we had begun to speak, proportional reciprocity is secured by diametrical composition.

NICOMACHUS. That sounds very mysterious, father.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, but it is quite a simple matter. Suppose that we have four terms, *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*—*A* for a mason, *B* for a shoemaker, *C* for a house, *D* for shoes, and suppose that we arrange them so as to form the four corners of a square, putting each workman's product under him, thus—



It is plain that, if the mason and the shoemaker are to benefit one another, the mason will not go to the shoemaker for a house nor the shoemaker to the mason for shoes. What the mason wants is shoes, and what the shoemaker wants is shelter. By drawing the diagonals *AD*, *BC*, we will indicate that the result of their relations must be to give each the product of the other. But the question has yet to be settled—In what proportion?

We will not assume any difference of worth between the shoemaker and the mason. Let each count for one, and no one for more than one, so that we can say—

As mason : shoemaker :: shoemaker : mason,

and so on in the case of all other workmen. But it by no means follows that—

As house : shoe :: shoe : house.

The unit of one workman may be of much greater value than the unit of another. We have therefore by some means to determine the problem—How many shoes are equal to one house? Let us suppose for the moment that this is done, and let *D* stand for this particular number of shoes. Now the two producers are in a position to effect a fair exchange. We can go round the square and say—

As *A* : *B* :: *D* : *C*.

Then, by alternation

As *A* : *D* :: *B* : *C*.

Lastly, by composition

As *A* + *D* : *A* :: *B* + *C* : *B*.

That is to say, the mason with the shoes and the shoemaker with the house part from one another content with their bargain, because neither of them has gained an advantage over the other. This is what I meant by saying that commercial justice is secured by diametrical composition.

Our theorem of course applies to all the arts alike. They depend for their very existence on production and consumption being equal to one another both in quantity and in quality. If the loss to the workman in the way of time, trouble, and energy expended upon his work were not compensated by a corresponding gain in the supply of his own needs, society could not hold together. For the life of the state, as of the man, depends upon the action and reaction of its parts. This is why a state or any association must consist of dissimilar parts. Two doctors cannot supply each other's needs, but a doctor and a farmer can. The farmer produces food and the doctor's skill maintains or restores health. If the farmer is ill, he will be glad to exchange food for the prospect of health, and so the doctor's

skill becomes a marketable commodity. But the question of proportion, which we postponed before, again faces us. If things are to be exchanged, they must be in some way commensurable. Now how can things so different in their nature as skill and food be measured against one another? This problem has been solved by the adoption of money as the medium of exchange. Whatever is used as the medium of exchange necessarily becomes also the measure of value. If the mason, the shoemaker, the doctor and the farmer can all be induced to take one commodity in return for their services, the value of all other commodities can be expressed in terms of this one, so that we have now the means of determining how many shoes are equal to one house and how much skill is equal to so much food. Without this contrivance we could not have established our proportion—

As *A* : *B* :: *D* : *C*.

As mason : shoemaker :: shoes : house;

and without this proportion there could have been no exchange, and consequently no association. You see then—do you not—the absolute necessity that there is for having some one commodity to serve as a universal measure of value?

THEOPHRASTUS. Yes, I seem to see that: but there are some questions I would like to ask, if I may.

ARISTOTLE. You will help me much, if you do.

THEOPHRASTUS. First, how could people have been induced originally to accept one commodity, which perhaps they didn't want, in lieu of the supply of their immediate needs? Second, how can skill be measured against money any more than against food?

ARISTOTLE. Your questions are well put, and I will do my best to answer them.

As regards the first, the name 'currency,' which we bestow on coin, would seem to point to its being adopted by current

consent. It is not a work of nature, but an institution of man. At all events men might, if they agreed to do so, cease to use gold as the medium of exchange, and so deprive it of its peculiar value. It would then be left only with such value as it may originally have had as a possession, not as an instrument of exchange. And some value of this kind, I take it, it must always have had, to account for its being adopted as the medium. For though we say that money is conventional, not natural, the result of agreement among men themselves, not a gift to man from nature, yet it is not to be supposed that men ever met together and formally agreed to accept gold in exchange for all other commodities. Rather the agreement was a tacit one, into which men were forced by the necessities of the situation. Not in this or that country alone, but practically all the world over, the precious metals have been accepted as the medium of exchange. They are a sort of language of commerce which everybody understands.

Now why this universal acceptance?

If our mason wanted shoes, and had only a house to give in exchange for them, he would have to take an inconveniently large quantity of shoes—that is to say, if he could get shoes for it at all, for that would depend on whether he could find a shoemaker who happened to want a house, just when he was on the look-out for shoes. A house, you see, is about as bad a basis of exchange as you could possibly select, because its unit-value is so great, it is so unportable, and so little capable of division. The man who was obliged to take a houseworth of every other commodity would find himself in a bad way. Then you cannot carry houses to market either at home or abroad; nor can you pay for thimbles in fractions of a house.

Now gold was a commodity the properties of which were the very reverse of all this. When I say it was a commodity,

I mean that it had a value in use. We need not suppose that it was found useful in manufacture before it was employed, money, but it was always used as an ornament. As soon as men have filled the insides of their bodies, their first thought is to adorn the outsides. This fact gave to gold an intrinsic value, which would make it exchange for something everywhere; for nothing is more world-pervading than vanity. But an ornament, however beautiful, loses its charm, if it becomes common: if vanity is to be gratified, *you* must have something which others have not. Now gold is a thing of which nature has produced but a small quantity. Its rarity then gives it great value in small bulk, and so it becomes one of the most portable of all things. Then the fact that it can be melted and divided into any number of parts you please, all of precisely similar quality, and can also, if required, be fused together again into one lump, makes it admirably adapted for purposes of exchange, whether against the smallest or largest commodities.

These considerations are, I think, sufficient to show why gold should by a tacit convention have been accepted as the medium of exchange. I have spoken of gold exclusively, partly for convenience of expression and partly because what I had to say was pre-eminently true of it, but you may extend my remarks to other metals, such as silver, iron, and copper, which are also used for money.

So much then for your first question. Now I turn to your second, which was to this effect—How can money serve as a common measure of things so disparate in their nature as, say, skill and food?

Well, theoretically speaking, it cannot, though for practical purposes it can. In the strict sense of the term a measure of anything must be a part of the thing itself, or at least homogeneous with it. Thus a line is measured by a line and a magnitude by another magnitude. Now the things

which money will purchase appear to be absolutely heterogeneous both from it and from one another; and so to admit of no common measure at all. The only thing they have in common is the fact that we want them, that is, that they have the power to gratify desire. Demand then is the real common measure of things. It is demand that is the soul of commerce, and money is only the expression of this vital principle. Take away demand and commerce dies; diminish it, and commerce droops; make it greater on one side than on the other, and you alter the conditions of commerce. But when there is an active demand on both sides, then commerce is brisk, as when a corn-producing country wants wine, and is ready in exchange for it to allow of the exportation of corn. Now money is, as it were, the conventional representative of demand. Plato did well when he called it a 'symbol.' And, like other symbols, it has the enormous advantage of universality. Money does not mean the demand for this or that particular commodity only, but the demand for something in general. When the shoemaker comes to the mason for a house, the mason may not want his shoes, but he is sure, sooner or later, to want something, and so, though he would not take the shoemaker's shoes, he is glad to get the shoemaker's money. Like the prime matter, which is actually nothing, but potentially everything, money is not itself wealth, but, so long as it passes current, it can be transformed into wealth: it is potentially any of the things it can purchase, and in succession all of them.

Now I have answered your second question, Theophrastus, to the best of my ability, and have endeavoured to show you how money serves to render things commensurable. Demand is the only real measure of value, but money, as it were, represents demand, or, perhaps I should express my meaning better by saying that it represents the certainty of

supply as soon as one feels a want. It is a pledge given to the receiver empowering him to complete an exchange at such time and in such a way as may be most convenient to himself. Money, therefore, must serve as a legal tender for any required commodity.

THEOPHRASTUS. But suppose people wanted a given commodity more than money, they would not be willing to take money in exchange for it.

ARISTOTLE. That is true, but you are assuming an exceptional case. There will generally be somebody who will be ready to give you what you want for money. In a time of famine indeed, or during a siege, when provisions have run short, money might be unable to procure food ; and, as food is necessary to life, you might be inclined to think that money had lost its value : but it would still retain its purchasing power in other respects. Money tends to have a permanent value more than anything else for the reason that I have already indicated, namely, that it represents potentially all commodities. Supposing the amount of money in circulation to remain the same, the only thing that would cause any serious fluctuation in its value would be a general increase or decrease in all other commodities. In times of plenty money will purchase more ; in seasons of dearth it will purchase less.

NICOMACHUS. This is a very interesting discussion, father, that you are having with Theophrastus. But have we not wandered away from justice ?

ARISTOTLE. No, my son, I think not. Proportional reciprocity in commerce is part of the problem of distributive justice, and it is only through the agency of money that this can be secured. A workman is unjustly dealt with, if he does not get an exact equivalent for his work. But how could he expect to get an exact equivalent, if we were still depending on the primitive method of barter ?

Sometimes he would get more value than he gave, and sometimes less, according to the immediate needs of the person with whom he was exchanging. It is only through the device of money that we are enabled to make out such a proportion as this—

As a farmer (A) : so much food (C) :: a shoemaker (B) : so many shoes (D)—

because without the aid of money we could not effect an equation between shoes and food. Even with its aid we can only do so roughly and for practical purposes, as I said before. But a great step has been made towards distributive justice when the general need for a commodity has been substituted in the determination of its value for the particular need of a given person at a given time.

Now I am going to sum up my argument about money in a way that will show you that, like justice, it is necessary to the very existence of society.

If there were no money, things would not be commensurable.

If things were not commensurable, there would be no equation of values.

If there were no equation of values, there would be no exchange.

If there were no exchange, there would be no society.

What conclusion follows from those premisses?

NICOMACHUS. Why, that if there were no money, there would be no society.

THEOPHRASTUS. It certainly does follow. But isn't it rather odd that it should? I have always understood that two negative premisses prove nothing, and I suppose *a fortiori* that four have no business to prove anything.

ARISTOTLE. They are only in appearance negative. It would be easy to express the same train of reasoning in an

affirmative form, beginning at the other end, and working backwards. But I must leave you to transpose it at your leisure, as we have somewhat overstepped our time already.

THEOPHRASTUS. Oh ! I see. May I do it now ?

ARISTOTLE. Well, let us hear you.

THEOPHRASTUS. If there is to be society, there must be exchange.

If there is to be exchange, there must be equation of values.

If there is to be equation of values, things must be commensurable.

If things are to be commensurable, there must be money.

. . . If there is to be society, there must be money.

ARISTOTLE. Quite right. Of course we mean by our conclusion—'If there is to be society worthy of the name.' Under a system of barter you might have households possessing property in common, and exchanging their surplus products with other such households : but the complex relations of a state could not be maintained under such a system. Now, Nicomachus, here's a problem for you before we close. If a house is worth five minas and a couch one, how many couches must you give for one house ?

NICOMACHUS. Five, father. I can solve that problem, you see, although it is mathematics.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, but would it have been so easy to solve, if there were not money to help you ?

LECTURE XXX

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, V. 5, § 17 to end of Ch. VIII]

IN WHAT SENSE JUSTICE IS A MEAN: JUSTICE DEFINED: CIVIL JUSTICE AND HOUSEHOLD JUSTICE: NATURAL AND CONVENTIONAL JUSTICE: DISTINCTION BETWEEN JUSTICE AND JUST DEALING: JUSTICE MUST BE VOLUNTARY

IN the tentative definition of justice with which we began we said that it was 'that sort of state in consequence of which men are able to do what is just.' As I pointed out to you at the time, this is not defining a thing by itself, but is an attempt to explain the internal by the external. What has been said since then may be considered to have thrown sufficient light on the nature of the just, objectively considered. We have seen that it is always a mean between too much and too little, either according to geometrical or according to arithmetical proportion. The unjust in like manner has been seen to be one or other of the extremes.

This being so, we may go on to say now that just dealing is a mean between doing and suffering what is unjust, between having too much, that is to say, and having too little. By 'just dealing' I mean the course of action which the just man pursues, without reference to the motive which prompts it. It would be possible to deal justly with-

out being just. Let us now come to justice itself—I mean to the state, subjectively considered.

The first thing we have to notice about it is that it seems at first sight to be an exception to the rule that virtue is a mean. Take any of the other moral virtues, and you can point to an opposite vice on each side of it, one in the way of excess and the other in that of defect; but justice has only one opposite, namely, injustice. Whether a man chooses too much good or too little evil for himself, we equally call him unjust.

THEOPHRASTUS. Is there not conceivably an opposite habit of mind which might lead a man to choose too little good for himself and too much evil? I don't suppose it would be common, but still it might exist sometimes, like insensibility to pleasure. And if there is such a thing, would it not be a vice of a nature opposite to injustice?

ARISTOTLE. There may be such a habit of mind with reference to external goods, with which alone justice and injustice are concerned. But, speaking absolutely, a man cannot choose evil. If he relinquishes his claim to a lower good, it is because he seeks a higher. Therefore I do not see how the habit of mind you speak of can be called a vice. It is a subject however to which we may return later. Meanwhile however, if justice is not a mean in the ordinary sense, as lying between two vices, we can still see that it is a mean in the sense of aiming at the mean, and herein it resembles virtue generally. The effect of justice is to embody itself in acts which are, as we have seen, in a quite literal and calculable sense means. The effect of injustice on the other hand is to embody itself in the extremes of too much and too little, too much good for one and too little for another. What then is justice itself? It is time to answer this question.

Justice is a habit of mind in virtue of which the just man

is said to be disposed to do purposely what is just, and to effect a distribution, whether as between himself and another, or between others, not in such a manner as to assign the greater share of the choiceworthy to himself, and the less to his neighbour, and inversely in the case of the hurtful, but so as to dispense the proportionately equal, whether as between himself and another or between others.

You see that our definition of justice is built on the popular conception from which we started. Only we have analyzed the idea of the just, and have arrived, I hope, at its essence, as being proportionate equality. Another difference is that for the vague 'wish' of the multitude we have substituted the 'will' or 'purpose' of the rationally good man.

What I have said of justice can easily be applied by yourselves to injustice. It leads a man to will the unjust, that is to say, the excess or defect of the useful or hurtful, and so to violate proportion. Injustice then is both excess and defect, because it aims at both excess and defect. In the case of the unjust man himself it always aims at the excess of that which is, abstractedly at all events, useful ; whereas in the case of others, the character of the act as a whole is the same, but the violation of proportion may be either on one side or the other. Lastly, as the state of mind which we call injustice has a double character, so also has its result, an act of injustice. Looked at from the point of view of the injured party, it is the less ; from that of the injurer, the more.

We may consider now that we have fulfilled the original scope of our inquiry concerning the nature of justice and injustice, as well as of the just and unjust generally. As justice is the last of the moral virtues, we ought to advance now to the consideration of the intellectual virtues. But I hardly think it advisable to enter on so heavy a subject in

the few days that now separate us from the Feast of Pitchers. When we resume our course after that break, we will hope to attack the subject with renewed energies. Consequently any questions or remarks that any of you may have to make will be more than ever welcome. They may afford me an opportunity of bringing out some points connected with justice, my handling of which I feel has been far too cramped and inadequate.

EUDEMUS. I was delighted, if you will allow me to say so, with your mathematical treatment of justice. As soon as a thing is connected with numbers, it seems at once to be set on a basis of eternal reality.

ARISTOTLE. I am afraid there is a vein of Pythagorean mysticism left in all of us, which I ought not to have encouraged. But I kept from going so far as to say that justice is a perfect square, and only showed how its nature could be illustrated by a square.

EUDEMUS. You dropped a remark in passing, that it would be possible to deal justly without being just. As justice is the exercise of virtue towards other people, I suppose that comes to the same thing as what you made clear to me before, namely, that one might act virtuously without being virtuous.

ARISTOTLE. It is the same thing under a different aspect.

NICOMACHUS. Then, I suppose, father, that a man may act unjustly without being unjust?

ARISTOTLE. To be sure he can. He may tell a lie without being a liar; he may steal without being a thief; he may commit a peccadillo without being a rake.

NICOMACHUS. Then I wish you would give us some criterion, father, to enable us to judge from a man's act whether he is to be called by these bad names or not.

ARISTOTLE. I am afraid you will not find any difference in the acts themselves, my son. It depends on whether

one does the thing on purpose or is betrayed into it by passion.

THEOPHRASTUS. I was struck by a remark you made some time ago to the effect that it might be possible to be a good citizen without being a good man.

ARISTOTLE. In an imperfect form of constitution it is. A good citizen must indeed always be a good man relatively to the ideal of the state to which he belongs. But, if that ideal be a mistaken one, he need not be a good man absolutely. It is only in the one perfect state that the good man and the good citizen necessarily coincide.

THEOPHRASTUS. But I suppose every state would have its own type of justice, to which it would expect its citizens to conform ?

ARISTOTLE. That is true : but science cannot take account of individual divergences. Justice, in the ideal sense, is the conduct towards one another of citizens in the perfect state. You may call this 'civil justice.'

THEOPHRASTUS. In that state, it is to be hoped, there would be no need for corrective justice. But why do you wish us to call perfect justice 'civil justice,' when that does not distinguish it from the imperfect types ?

ARISTOTLE. You may include the imperfect types under the term 'civil justice,' if you like. The fact is, another distinction has just occurred to me, which I think it may be useful to dwell on. There are relations between man and man which do not come under civil justice, but which still may be regulated by justice in a secondary sense. The reciprocity, of which I have spoken, is only possible in the relations of free citizens co-operating towards the attainment of a perfect life and standing to one another on a footing of proportionate or absolute equality. Take away this reciprocity, and you have no civil justice, no justice in what we consider to be the proper sense of the term, but you may

still have what is called justice in virtue of its resemblance to the other.

Before however I proceed to speak about these secondary forms, let me give you a few thoughts which occur to me about the primary.

Justice exists only between those between whom there exists law. Now law implies the possibility of injustice. It is this possibility, or rather the too frequent actuality, of injustice, which calls for the machinery of legal justice, which we may regard as the organization of civil society. It is the function of legal justice to enforce the recognition of moral justice, where it is not spontaneously complied with. Where there is the possibility, there is pretty sure to be the actuality of injustice. I mean that where the spirit of injustice exists, it is likely to make itself evident in the commission of unjust acts, though it is quite possible to have unjust acts which are not prompted by the spirit of injustice. By the commission of injustice I mean, as you know, the assigning to oneself the greater share of what is, abstractedly considered, good, and the lesser share of what is, from a similar point of view, evil.

NICOMACHUS. You say 'abstractedly considered,' do you not, father, because it would be possible for a man to be really doing himself the greatest injury when he thought that he was grabbing at good?

ARISTOTLE. Yes, men are always making such mistakes as to their real interest ; and to guard against the harm that results therefrom to themselves and others, we do not allow any man to possess irresponsible power, but regard reason as our only ruler. Reason, having no passions, is not troubled by cupidity, and so will not turn tyrant like a man. But then reason, it must be confessed, is weak in the executive department, and so we have to appoint a human ruler as her prime minister, taking care however to impress

upon him that he is merely a guardian of justice, and, if of justice, then of equality.

NICOMACHUS. Then he gets no advantage by being ruler ; for, if he is just, he will not assign to himself anything but what falls proportionately to him, and which therefore any one else would assign to him who conducted a just distribution. He must be a very benevolent man to take so much trouble for others. I can understand now why justice should be called another's good.

ARISTOTLE. I might say to you with Socrates that he gets the advantage of not being ruled by a worse man. But I think the motive that really operates on the average human ruler is the honour and privileges attaching to the position. We pay him a large salary of this kind to prevent peculation. It is those who are not satisfied with this kind of payment who turn tyrants.

So much for civil justice. But the relations of life are not confined to the intercourse between free and equal citizens. Outside the household men meet as peers, but within his own household every father of a family is king.

The household we regard as resting upon three relations, all of them natural ones—to wit, the relation

- (1) Of husband and wife,
- (2) Of parent and child,
- (3) Of master and slave.

The spirit which should regulate all three relations may be called in a sense 'justice,' but we had better call it 'household justice,' to distinguish it from the civil justice already spoken of.

The particular species which subsists between master and slave we may call 'despotic justice.'

The slave, as such, has no rights at all against his master, any more than the pocket-knife has, which the master carries about with him to do the work of cutting. A tool is a life-

less slave, and a slave is a living tool. One's foot or hand might as well claim rights against one as a slave. The slave in fact is part of his master as much as any limb. He has no will of his own, but is dominated by the will of his owner as the limbs of the body are. He is, in fact, an extension of his master's person, being a limb that has the advantage of being able to operate at a distance.

THEOPHRASTUS. That is an uncommonly convenient theory—for the master.

ARISTOTLE. It is the theory on which household slavery rests. If the master and the slave do not both find their account in it, the master in obtaining the services of the slave, and the slave in thus being taken into the personality of his master, their relation does not rest on a natural basis, and evil is likely to come of it. Now, granting this theory, it is easy to see that there cannot be injustice towards a slave, any more than there can be towards oneself, since a slave is part of oneself. I mean of course that there is no injustice or justice in the civil sense; for we have seen that this is based on law and exists only between those between whom it is natural for law to exist, that is to say, between equals, whose relations are based on the perfect reciprocity of ruling and being ruled in turn. To say that there is justice in this full sense between master and slave is to say, that the slave might some time become master. But the master is always master and the slave is always a slave. The spirit then which should regulate the relation between master and slave is not justice, though it is something like justice. You may be kind and considerate to a slave, and you may even love him as a man. We have called the feeling 'despotic justice.'

NICOMACHUS. And how about the relation of parent and child, father?

ARISTOTLE. The child, my son, so long as he is a child, is part of the father and governed by his will, just as the

slave is. But there is this great difference between the two cases. The child will in time cease to be so, and will become a man having equal rights with his father. Until then however there can be no justice or injustice in the full sense towards him. We may call the feeling which should regulate the relations between father and child 'paternal justice.'

EUDEMUS. There remains the relation between husband and wife.

ARISTOTLE. There we come to something which borders more closely upon civil justice. For though the husband ought always to rule, and always does so, when the union is a natural one, yet the wife also should be supreme in her own department. She should be allowed the control of the things in the house ; for it is the function of the man to get and of the woman to keep. A man also has no business to interfere with his wife in her management of the maid-servants.

EUDEMUS. And what name would you give to this kind of justice ?

ARISTOTLE. It will suffice to call it by the generic name of household justice.

THEOPHRASTUS. As that subject seems to be exhausted, I would like to introduce a fresh one. You identified civil justice with absolute or perfect justice. Does not that look somewhat like a concession to the theory of Protagoras, with which I know you do not agree, that all justice is conventional ?

ARISTOTLE. I don't know why it should. Even those who maintain most strenuously that justice exists by nature, and not merely by convention, would be ready to allow that it is an outgrowth of society. But then society itself exists by nature. Society, by which I mean the state, is founded on the family, and the family is founded on the three

relations of which we have spoken, and which, as I remarked before, are natural.

THEOPHRASTUS. Then is civil justice the same thing as natural justice?

ARISTOTLE. In a perfect state of society the ordinances of man would coincide with the law of nature.

THEOPHRASTUS. In that case it looks as if they would be superfluous.

ARISTOTLE. Well, we will waive that question, as it is not a burning one—at present. But civil justice, in any sense in which we can be practically concerned with it, must be regarded as containing two elements—a natural and a conventional, or purely legal, element. I have said that justice is coextensive with law: but under the conception of law you ought to include the law of nature, as well as the law of man. The former is common to all mankind, the latter is special to a given community. To these two kinds of law the two elements of which I have spoken in civil justice correspond. The naturally just is not confined to this or that locality, but has everywhere the same force, not depending in any wise upon opinion: it may or may not be established by law also, but even if it is, it does not derive its sanction from law only. The conventionally just, on the other hand, is made by opinion and law. It is something which is in its own nature indifferent, but which, when enacted, becomes just and right; for instance, that the ransom for a common soldier should be one mina, or that the sacrifice to Zeus should be a goat and not a couple of sheep. Under the same head comes such particular legislation as the sacrifices which the citizens of Amphipolis have instituted to Brasidas, together with all matters of special decree.

THEOPHRASTUS. But is there any kind of justice which is recognised all the world over?

ARISTOTLE. I did not say there was. What I maintain

is that the naturally just has everywhere the same force, whether it be recognised or not. When nature marks a thing out to be wrong, she herself affixes the penalty. The evil consequences of such an act are as much a part of it as the properties of a triangle. The Protagoreans ignore this fact when they argue that justice must be purely an invention of man, on the ground that nature is uniform, whereas ideas of justice are not. 'Fire,' they say, 'burns the same here as in Persia: but how different are our ideas of right and wrong from those current in Persia?' Let us do them the justice of admitting that there is something in what they say. Still there is not nearly so much as they think. For not only do they exaggerate the mutability of morals, but they also exaggerate the immutability of nature. Among the Gods perhaps they will find the absolute immutability for which they crave, but in this sublunary sphere all is liable to change, including even nature herself. But this does not prevent us from saying that one thing is natural and another not; though all things material admit of being otherwise than as they are, there is still a tangible distinction between what exists by nature and what is merely the result of law and convention. Take an instance from another department of nature, and you will see the truth of what I am saying. No one I suppose would maintain that the distinction between the right hand and the left is a merely conventional matter. It is obvious that the right hand is naturally stronger than the left. And yet, if we were all to practise throwing and other actions assiduously with the left hand, we might all become ambidextrous. Still as a matter of fact we do not. Why? Because nature is too strong for us. You must regard nature then as a set of tendencies, which may indeed be frustrated, but which prevail on the whole and in the long run.

Now contrast with this natural justice, which has every-

where the same force, the merely conventional justice of man, which is dictated by local and temporary expediencies. This is not the same everywhere, any more than the measures by which a merchant buys are the same as those by which he sells. The reason of these divergences in conventional justice we have seen already. Justice is always relative to the state, and every state has its own type of justice. Nevertheless there is one perfect type, which is realised in the one perfect state. In that state the conventional and the natural coincide, just as what seems good to the perfect man coincides with what is good.

NICOMACHUS. Theophrastus has certainly had his turn now, father; and I think you rather shelved my question—I daresay I did not put it very well—as to how we are to know, when the same act is done, whether it stamps a man as downright unjust or not.

ARISTOTLE. I think I have dealt with that point often enough, my son: but as it is no part of my method to avoid repetitions, let us deal with it again. Some new point of view often presents itself when one treats of the same thing in a fresh connexion.

I think we might begin now by noticing the distinction between abstract principles of right and wrong and their embodiment in acts. What is right or wrong in principle stands to what is right or wrong in fact as the universal to the particular—as the one to the many. A thing may be unjust in principle either because it is forbidden by the law of nature or by the law of man. As soon as the commandment, of whichever kind, is transgressed, then we have what is unjust in fact, which we will call an 'act of injustice.'

Similarly a thing may be just in principle, whether it be put into practice or not: but as soon as it is put into practice, then it passes into the just in fact. We might call it then an 'act of justice,' only for the tendency that there is in

usage to limit that term to the rectification of wrong. It will be safer therefore to call it 'just dealing.' 'Just dealing' then you will understand to be a generic term including just acts that are performed for their own sakes as well as those that are necessitated by previous injustice, as when we say that it is an act of justice to put a murderer to death.

Having emphasized this distinction between the just or unjust in principle and the just or unjust in fact, we may now go on to say that a man is held to act justly or unjustly, when his action in either case is voluntary. When, on the other hand, it is not voluntary, he cannot be held to have acted either justly or unjustly, except indeed indirectly.

NICOMACHUS. What do you mean by 'indirectly,' father?

ARISTOTLE. I mean that he has done what might argue justice or injustice in another but not in him. For to have either an act of injustice or a piece of just dealing, the will must be called into play. When an unjust act is done voluntarily, it is blamed, and then only does it amount to an act of injustice or injury: so that you may have an act which violates all principles of justice and yet is not an act of injustice, in case the element of voluntariness has not entered into it.

NICOMACHUS. Would you mind defining the voluntary again, father?

ARISTOTLE. What we said about it was something like this. It is something in one's own power, which one does with full knowledge, not being under any misapprehension either as to the patient or the instrument or the tendency of the act; for instance, striking a man, knowing who he is, and with what you are striking him, and what the result of such an act is likely to be. The indirectness, you see, of ignorance and compulsion must be alike excluded.

Let me illustrate what I mean. You might know that

you were beating a man in a brawl on a dark night, but you might not know that that man was your father. In that case you would certainly, physically speaking, have beaten your father, but, morally speaking, you would not. That will give you an idea of what I mean by doing the thing indirectly. Again, if some one were to take hold of your hand, and therewith deal your father a blow in the face, although it was your hand that dealt the blow, it would not be you that did the deed, for you were not a voluntary agent: you acted under compulsion, and the efficient cause did not lie with you.

Ignorance of the tendency, or result, and of the other constituents of a moral act might be illustrated in a similar way. But I think I have said enough to re-establish the conclusion at which we arrived before, that an act is involuntary, if it be due to ignorance or to compulsion.

EUDEMUS. What are we to make of such processes as go on in us from nature, consciously enough, but independently of our own wills? A man may know that he is digesting his food or that his heart is beating; he certainly knows when he is growing grey, and is often aware of the fact that he is dying. Are such acts voluntary or involuntary?

THEOPHRASTUS. I should think that dying was a highly involuntary act. Most people object to it strongly.

EUDEMUS. But we draw a marked distinction between a *natural* and a *violent* death. And, generally, is not nature a distinct principle from force or compulsion?

ARISTOTLE. I quite see your difficulty, Eudemus, and am glad you have raised it. Let us take a particular instance, that of growing old. A man is fully aware of the fact that he is growing old. The act, therefore, if it can be called such, is certainly not due to ignorance. Neither, as you well point out, is it due to compulsion, since we contrast

nature with force or compulsion. It would seem then that we ought to recognise a third class of involuntary act, as I gather that you wish to do, which is neither due to ignorance nor to compulsion, but to nature. But does not the difficulty, after all, arise from our neglecting the only really logical division of acts, namely, into voluntary and non-voluntary? To the latter class, if you remember, we assigned all acts that are due to ignorance, because as their real nature is not before the mind of the agent, his will could not be consulted on the subject. In that class they remained, if he did not repent of them: but, if the pain and repentance they caused him showed that they did really run counter to his will, then we consented to elevate them into involuntary acts.

NICOMACHUS. Then, I suppose, father, that growing old and dying are non-voluntary acts: but if a man strongly objects to them, as Theophrastus seemed to think most people did, they would in his case be involuntary.

ARISTOTLE. Perhaps that is the truth of the matter. But let us defend the sage from Theophrastus, and say that, as he lives in accordance with nature, a death in the course of nature will never run counter to his will.

Now to return to what I was saying.

Just, as well as unjust, acts may be done indirectly or contingently. A man returns a deposit. Well and good: he has done the kind of act a just man would do. But he does it reluctantly and through fear. Then he has not done it in the spirit in which the just man would do it, and so cannot be credited with an act of justice. He has only done the just act indirectly. You all remember the story told by Herodotus of Glaucus, the son of Epicydes, who consulted the oracle at Delphi as to whether he should restore a treasure to the sons of the man who left it with him, when they had duly presented the half-tickets, entitling

them to receive it. The prophetess frightened him into honesty by alluding to the awful consequences of perjury. He did the just act, but it was not counted to him for justice ; for, as the story runs, the threatened consequences were visited upon him, and his race was utterly blotted out from Sparta. I forget the exact words of the oracle, but no doubt Theophrastus can help us here as usual.

THEOPHRASTUS.

'Swear, Epicydes' son : 'twill suit thy book for the present
Lightly to reck of thine oath, and swag the cash of the stranger.
Swear: for one end awaits alike the just and the villain.
Aye, but a being is born without name, by perjury fathered ;
Headless and footless it is, but swift to pursue and to capture,
E'en to the utter destroying of house and of sons and de-
scendants.
Nay, but abide by thine oath, and thy race shall endure for
the future.'

ARISTOTLE. That is certainly the drift of the oracle. But have you not been tampering with the wording, especially in the first two lines ? No oracle ever spoke like that.

THEOPHRASTUS. I'm sure of the spirit, but I can't be sure of the letter. But I wonder how it is that the God who is supposed to preside over poetry should be generally so poor a poet. Perhaps it is that his thoughts suffer in the process of translation. And yet the specimens of the language of the Gods, which Homer has preserved to us, appear to be good Greek enough.

ARISTOTLE. You are irrelevant, Theophrastus, if not frivolous. Take example by Eudemus.

Now let us turn to the reverse case. Suppose that Glaucus, the son of Epicydes, had really possessed the justice for which he was renowned, but was prevented by superior force from returning the deposit, or was genuinely

convinced that the tickets were forged, do you think then that he would have deserved to incur a penalty for injustice?

THEOPHRASTUS. No, he would only have committed the unjust act indirectly.

ARISTOTLE. Why?

THEOPHRASTUS. Because it was involuntary, being due to compulsion or ignorance.

ARISTOTLE. How did we divide voluntary acts?

THEOPHRASTUS. Into pure and mixed.

ARISTOTLE. Did we divide them in any other way?

THEOPHRASTUS. Into those done on purpose and those not.

ARISTOTLE. How did we differentiate those that were done on purpose?

THEOPHRASTUS. By their being premeditated.

ARISTOTLE. That's right. Your wits may wander, but I see that they can be at home when they're wanted. The little examination, which I have put you through, has served the further purpose of reminding us of some things which it is useful to bear in mind at present.

I want now to distinguish between the different kinds of harm that may be done by one man to another in social intercourse. Sometimes the harm is done in sheer ignorance, owing to mistake with regard to some of the vital circumstances of the act,—the patient, object, instrument, or result. A man may not have intended to hit anybody, or not with what he did, or not the person whom he did, or not with the result that has actually ensued, for instance he may not have intended to wound, but only to prick.

When then the harm results contrary to all reasonable expectation, it is a mischance or accident, but when it might reasonably have been expected, but is void of evil intent, it is a fault. To prove that harm done implies a fault, you see, it is necessary that the principle of causation should lie

in the agent ; when it lies outside of him, the thing is a mere accident. When, however, a man is fully aware of the harm he is doing, then we have not merely a fault, but a positive piece of injustice.

NICOMACHUS. And, I suppose, father, that this is the kind of act which stamps a man as unjust ?

ARISTOTLE. Even yet, my son, I won't go so far as to say that. If there's any doubt, we're bound to give the prisoner the benefit of it. Now suppose that a man inflicted some harm on another, knowing well enough what he was doing, but misled for the moment by anger or by some of those passions which are naturally and necessarily incidental to man, although we should not hesitate to brand his behaviour as unjust, ought we not to think twice before we branded his character ? The mere voluntariness then of an act of injustice is not enough to stamp the agent as a bad and unjust man : we must further know that the act is done on purpose.

NICOMACHUS. Then, when an act of injustice is committed on purpose, a man is at last proved to be unjust ?

ARISTOTLE. Yes : I've nothing more to say for him then. But the courts of justice recognise the distinction that I have drawn between injuries prompted by anger and those that are due to malice aforethought. And they are right in doing so. For in the former case the origin of the mischief does not lie with the man who has acted in a passion, but with him who put him into a passion. And again, the question under dispute is not one of fact, but of justice : for anger is stirred at the appearance of injustice. In a dispute about fact—for instance, as to whether a debt has been paid or not—one of the two parties must be a knave, unless the difference be due to a lapse of memory. But in a dispute about justice both may be equally convinced that they are in the right. This then makes a strong

difference between injuries arising from anger and those due to deliberate wickedness. In the former the injurer fancies he has a grievance, in the latter he does not.

It is then when equality, either actual or 'proportionate, is violated deliberately and of malice aforethought that we have the blackest sort of injustice, which necessitates a condemnatory inference as to the character of the agent.

Similarly a man can only be inferred to be of just character, when the act is done of set purpose for its own sake : but we may say that he is dealing justly, whatever his motive may be, if only we know him to be acting voluntarily.

EUDEMUS. I notice that you now speak definitely of acts due to anger as being done knowingly. Before, although you would not allow that they were due to ignorance, you still spoke of them as being done in ignorance.

ARISTOTLE. I did ; and I think that the contradiction is more apparent than real. When a thing is of an ambiguous nature, one's language about it is liable to vary. We talk of a man being blinded by passion, and yet in a way he knows what he is doing.

EUDEMUS. You told us, I remember, that pardon and pity were the proper attitude of mind towards involuntary offences, and I can understand that this is so in the case of acts that are not merely done in ignorance but due to ignorance. But, suppose you have a man who commits an atrocious deed under the mastery of some abnormal and unnatural passion, would you say that it was proper to pardon him ?

ARISTOTLE. If I were speaking strictly, I would not say that such an act was involuntary. For though the passion by which it was prompted was unnatural in the abstract, it was nevertheless part of the perverted nature of the agent. I see that the tendency to call some at least of the acts that are prompted by passion involuntary must be very strong

since it infects you still after all that we have said against it. But if one once gives way to it, I do not see how we are to stop short of pronouncing all acts whatever to be involuntary, since they are all prompted by feeling of some sort. You had better recall at your leisure the arguments that I gave you before on that subject. As for pardon and pity in the case of the committer of an abnormal crime, you might be sorry that the man's nature was what it is, but you would seek to rid society of him, as you would of a dangerous wild beast.

Next time I shall be glad to discuss any difficulties which you may like to raise. I hope you will come with a good budget of questions.

LECTURE XXXI

[NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, V. 9-11]

CAN A MAN BE INJURED VOLUNTARILY? IN A
FALSE AWARD WHO DOES THE INJUSTICE?
CAN A MAN BE UNJUST TO HIMSELF? IS IT
WORSE TO DO OR TO SUFFER INJUSTICE?
EQUITY—THE EQUITABLE MAN

WELL, Theophrastus, I can see that you have something to say.

THEOPHRASTUS. Yes. I have been reading the Alcmaeon of Euripides, in which the poet makes Alcmaeon say—

‘I slew my mother: short’s the tale, not sweet.’

And the answer he receives is—

‘What, willing both? Or, willy nilly her?’

Now suppose he had not slain her willy nilly, but with her own consent, would he have been doing her an injury? And, generally, can a person be injured voluntarily?

ARISTOTLE. And have you any difficulty to propound, Eudemus?

EUDEMUS. Mine is rather a formal one. Is it the man who gives an unfair award or the man who receives it who commits injustice?

ARISTOTLE. Now, Nicomachus, it's your turn.

NICOMACHUS. I should like to know, father, whether a man can be unjust to himself.

ARISTOTLE. Very well. Now we have our program before us. Let us take each question in turn, and see what we can make of it.

To begin with the point raised by Theophrastus. The commission of injustice is always voluntary. We are agreed about that, and can take it as a basis to start from. The question is about the passive side of the same transaction. Is that always involuntary? Or is it, let us say for form's sake, always voluntary? Or is it sometimes voluntary and sometimes involuntary? That exhausts the possible alternatives. But why confine our view to injustice? Justice also on its active side is always voluntary. As the doing then both of justice and injustice is always voluntary, it might seem that this uniformity on the active side would be balanced by a corresponding uniformity of voluntariness or involuntariness on the passive side, in the way of suffering justice or injustice. Do I make my meaning clear, Theophrastus?

THEOPHRASTUS. Perfectly.

ARISTOTLE. But consider now whether there is this uniformity in the way of suffering justice. When you assign a man a well-deserved prize, he takes it voluntarily enough, does he not?

THEOPHRASTUS. Yes.

ARISTOTLE. But when you condemn him to be whipped for theft or hanged for murder, is his consent equally assured?

THEOPHRASTUS. No, certainly not.

ARISTOTLE. And yet you are doing justice to him quite as much in the latter case as in the former, and he on his side is suffering justice equally in both.

THEOPHRASTUS. Then the presumption would now seem to lie in favour of the view that the suffering injustice is sometimes voluntary and sometimes involuntary. And so I suppose that Alcmaeon's mother might have submitted voluntarily to being slain ; and therefore that my question whether a person can be injured voluntarily is answered in the affirmative.

ARISTOTLE. Before we admit that, we must make sure that the person who suffers what is unjust is always injured. But is this quite so certain? Let us compare the passive side again with the active. It is as possible, I suppose, to receive just treatment indirectly as to give it. And the same thing applies to injustice. In fact, just the same distinction that we drew between doing what was unjust and inflicting an injury may be drawn over again with respect to suffering what is unjust and receiving an injury ; and the same with regard to being dealt justly with and having justice done to you. The man who is justly dealt with suffers what is just, but he cannot be said to have justice done to him, unless there's some one to do it, which there is not, if the thing be done indirectly. Similarly a person may suffer what is unjust without an act of injustice on the part of another, but it is impossible for him to be injured unless there is some one who injures him. If you want to prove then that a person can be injured with his own consent, you have first to prove that it is possible for some one thus to injure him.

THEOPHRASTUS. Well, I think I can prove that.

ARISTOTLE. I should like to hear you do so.

THEOPHRASTUS. To injure a man is voluntarily to do him harm. By 'voluntarily' we mean knowing the patient, the instrument, the manner, and so on. Now take the case of the man who lacks self-restraint. He knows himself and all about himself, and he voluntarily does harm to himself.

But voluntarily to do harm to a man is to injure him. Therefore the man who lacks self-restraint injures himself, or, in other words, is unjust to himself.

NICOMACHUS. There you're trespassing on my ground.

THEOPHRASTUS. And therefore he is injured with his own consent. Q.E.D.

That is the proof I would prefer to give. But as Nicomachus has warned me off his ground, I will alter it slightly. A man of such a kind may be led by his passions into allowing some one else voluntarily to do him harm. This other person then injures him with his own consent, and therefore he is injured with his own consent. So again I say Q.E.D.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, you are fully entitled to say so on your premisses; and I see I shall have to take you off your premises, if I am to get the better of you. You say that to injure a man is voluntarily to do him harm, and that by 'voluntarily' we mean so and so. That is not really enough to constitute an injury. We should add to the definition 'against his own wish.'

THEOPHRASTUS. Oh, if you're going to add that to the definition, of course I give in at once. It would be a mere contradiction in terms to talk of injuring a man with his consent, if an injury must be against his consent.

ARISTOTLE. Well, I think that's the true definition of an injury, and you won't mind giving in to truth. A man may be hurt voluntarily and may voluntarily suffer what is unjust, but no one can be injured voluntarily, for no man ever wishes to be injured. Even the man who hurts himself knowingly from lack of self-restraint does not wish to be injured, but allows himself to be carried away into acting against his wish. We hold that 'wish' is the deliberate desire for good or for what one deems to be good. The man who lacks self-restraint does what he

deems not to be good, else there would be no lack of self-restraint about him.

THEOPHRASTUS. Then the intemperate man, who mistakes evil for good, wishes to be injured. No: I retract that, since you make it essential to injury that it should go against one's wish.

ARISTOTLE. You are held as in a vice by the definition, Theophrastus; but you made a capital fight for your thesis. I generally have Glaucus quoted to me, who gave Diomede 'gold for brass,' as Homer says, 'and the worth of a hundred oxen for that of nine.' But plainly that is no case of being injured voluntarily. It rests with a man himself to give, but it does not rest with himself to be injured. He can't be injured where there's no one to injure him.

NICOMACHUS. No one except himself, father.

ARISTOTLE. We'll come to that presently, my son. Now we must call upon Eudemus to state his case.

EUDEMUS. My difficulty, I think, will soon be disposed of. It is rather in the words than in the things. You made the essence of an unjust act to lie in the person who commits it having too much. Now in the case of an unfair award it is the man who receives it who has too much, not the man who gives it, so that, if one presses the words, the injustice would seem to lie at the door of the former. I feel, however, that this is rather a quibble, so, assuming the injustice to lie with the giver of the award, we might pass on at once to the consideration of Nicomachus' difficulty, which seems really to lie very much at the root of the matter. For, if it is the giver of the award who commits the injustice, then, if a man knowingly and voluntarily assigns more to another than he does to himself, their worth being assumed to be equal, he must be guilty of injustice to himself.

ARISTOTLE. Is that so? You have described the con-

duct of the equitable man, who often takes less than his due. But may he not be covetous of some other good than those he is distributing, of glory, it may be, or simply of pure, unadulterated nobility of conduct? If in any way he receives a *quid pro quo* he cannot be said to be injured. No one ever takes credit to himself for being injured, but you often find a man taking credit to himself for giving way to an elder or a friend, in matters where he would have been entitled to share with him on equal terms.

THEOPHRASTUS. There again, the definition, I think, will prove as awkward for Nicomachus as it did for me. The man who assigns more to another than he does to himself suffers nothing against his own wish, and therefore he cannot be injured thereby, but at the most hurt.

ARISTOTLE. That is so, I think; but let Nicomachus wait. It will teach him not to be impatient.

I have still to deal with your difficulty, Eudemus. Here are three reasons for your believing that the injustice lies with the giver of an unfair award rather than with the receiver—

- (1) The will to do wrong lies with him;
- (2) He is the agent;
- (3) He commits injustice of some sort, whether he is aware of his unfairness or not.

(1) To detect something more than what by right belongs to him among a man's external possessions is not nearly such damning evidence against him as to detect the will to commit injustice in his soul. Now the latter is the case with the distributor. In him lies the efficient cause, and therefore the act lies with him.

(2) If the act lies with him, it follows of course that he is the agent. The receiver of the award is a mere instrument, by aid whereof injustice is perpetrated. He does injustice only in the sense in which a burglar's crowbar

does it, or one's hand, or a slave who acts at his master's bidding. In that sense you can do injustice without being unjust. Even so the man who receives the palm from an unfair umpire may do injustice without being unjust.

(3) The third argument is a dilemma. Either the distributor is aware of his unfairness or he is not. If he is not, he commits no breach of the law, for that only commands him to make the award fairly, according to the best of his knowledge and belief. But though he does not break the law of man, he sins grievously against the law of nature, which is a thing one may do without knowing. He has set going an injustice which will have its consequences independently of whether he intended to commit the crime or not. If, on the other hand, he is aware of his unfairness, then he is seeking some advantage for himself either in the way of favour or the gratification of revenge. Both of these come under the head of what we agreed to call loosely 'gain.' So that the distributor has, morally speaking, more than his share, just as he would physically, if he actually took part in the fruits of injustice. Even in the latter case he would probably not obtain payment in kind, but, if he awarded some one a landed estate, would receive a consideration in money.

THEOPHRASTUS. I think Eudemus' difficulty may be considered to be not only dead, but buried. I don't want to revive my own, but I was struck by the last remark you made to me in connexion with it, that it does not rest with a man himself to be injured. Here the passive side seems in strong contrast with the active, for people are certainly under the idea that it rests with a man himself to be unjust.

ARISTOTLE. Yes, and that is a most fertile source of error. I'm sure you don't share it, after all that we have said on the subject at one time or another. It leads them to imagine, to begin with, that it is an easy thing to be just,

a thing which they have merely to make up their minds to. 'I will turn over a new leaf to-morrow,' says some one to himself, 'and from this day forth I will be just.' But to-morrow comes and the next day and another day, and still he is not just. Happily it is equally impossible for the just man to be unjust straight off. He may behave unjustly —that is perfectly open to him. He may go and lie with his neighbour's wife, he may knock his neighbour down for objecting to it, and corrupt his servants by bribery, but still that is not being unjust.

THEOPHRASTUS. I must say you are very charitable.

ARISTOTLE. I am purposely putting the case strongly, because I want to lay stress on the fact that the scene of justice and injustice is the heart of man, and not the outward sphere of act at all. They are both states of the will which are not to be had for the asking, but only by strenuous endeavour.

This shows the fallacy of those who think that a man can be turned out just by a course of instruction. As the man who has learnt carpentry is a carpenter, and the man who has learnt medicine a doctor, so, they say, the man who has learnt justice is just. Indeed, they seem to think that the profession of justice is easier than another trade or profession or craft, for it requires no very deep philosophy to know what the laws enjoin. But this is not so: far from it. For this knowledge, and even the practice of it, does not constitute justice, except indirectly. You must act towards your neighbours and distribute external goods in a certain spirit before your conduct can be really just either in the wider or narrower sense of the term, and this is a harder task than to know the conditions of health. And even there the same distinction holds good; for mere knowledge does not make a man a doctor. It is easy enough to know honey and wine and hellebore and cautery and surgical

operations, but the skill to apply this knowledge so as to procure health for a given person at a given time is what really makes the doctor; and this is only to be had by constant practice.

If all this were borne in mind, we should hear less of such nonsense as that of the just man being a good thief and an accomplished rascal generally, because, forsooth, knowing thoroughly the nature of injustice, he is as well or better able to commit it than one who has not studied it by contrast with its opposite. The temperate man can do the things that I have mentioned, and which I need not repeat, as well as the intemperate. Of course he can. And the brave man can fling away his shield and take to his heels either in this direction or in that. But, I repeat, it is not the acts that make cowardice and injustice, but the doing them in a certain spirit, just as the skill of the physician to restore health does not lie in performing or not performing an operation, in administering physic or refraining from administering it, but in doing so in the physician's way. But there now—I must stop. I am afraid I have been betrayed into a little heat.

THEOPHRASTUS. You so seldom give play to your feelings that it is quite delightful to hear you when you do. But I have a question to ask now of a purely speculative character. You referred incidentally to a point on which you dwelt before, about particular justice being concerned with the distribution of external goods. Is it then confined to man?

ARISTOTLE. It is obviously confined to those who possess external goods, and I think we may go further and say that it must be confined to those who can have too much or too little of them. Both distributive and corrective justice rest, I suppose, on the assumption that there is a certain amount of things in the abstract good which are good also for the

individual, and that this certain amount is best procured, on the average, by producing and upholding the social equilibrium. The man who upsets this equilibrium does harm to another, in leaving him less goods than are good for him, and harm also to himself in taking more than is good for him. Now, if we could imagine external goods in relation to the Gods at all, we could at all events not suppose that they could be spoiled by any excess of them. On the other hand, if we were to conceive of an infra-human society consisting of incurably wicked beings, justice would equally lose its meaning in relation to them, for no amount at all of things absolutely good could by any possibility be good for them. So that justice is an eminently human thing.

But it is high time that we should attend to Nicomachus. Now, my son, have your say.

NICOMACHUS. I was going to argue, father, that it was possible for a man to be unjust to himself both in the wider and in the narrower sense. But in respect to the latter, you have already knocked the bottom out of my argument in dealing with Eudemus. So I must restrict myself to the former, in which justice is coextensive with the ordinances of law. Now there's no law that orders a man to kill himself: so I suppose I may assume that that's against the law.

ARISTOTLE. You may, especially if you take law in the ideal sense of all that reason would enjoin.

NICOMACHUS. My next step is that when a man, contrary to law, does harm voluntarily and not by way of retaliation, he is guilty of injustice. Is that granted?

ARISTOTLE. We'll grant it for the sake of argument.

NICOMACHUS. By 'voluntarily' I mean knowing the patient, the instrument, and so on.

ARISTOTLE. You're determined to do things in due form.

NICOMACHUS. Of course, I must leave no loophole. Now

comes another step. When a man kills himself in a fit of passion he is acting contrary to right reason, and that's flat in the teeth of law. Therefore he is committing injustice. But injustice is relative. Therefore he must be unjust to somebody. But there's no one else for him to be unjust to except himself, for we'll suppose that he's an orphan and a bachelor. Therefore he is unjust to himself. So, like Theophrastus, I end up with Q.E.D.

ARISTOTLE. Bravo, my son! But I'm afraid you've left out of count one party interested in the transaction.

NICOMACHUS. Whom?

ARISTOTLE. The state. It is against the state that the injustice is committed. He is robbing it possibly of a good general or statesman, or, it may be, of a good carpenter or cobbler, at all events of a citizen. And accordingly we find that the state resents the proceeding, and marks its displeasure by some deprivation of civil rights. Sometimes it does not allow his body to be buried at all. Here in Athens a milder course is adopted, and the hand that has injured the state is buried separately from the rest of the body. We are precluded from saying that the injustice is done to himself. For then he would be injured voluntarily, which has already been shown to be impossible.

NICOMACHUS. That's the worst of coming last in the argument.

ARISTOTLE. Never mind: your argument was well constructed, though it failed to take account of the amended definition of injustice.

NICOMACHUS. You see it was constructed before I heard that.

ARISTOTLE. But that made in favour of your argument, not against it. For you supposed a man to kill himself in a fit of passion, in which case he would be acting contrary to his own wish.

NICOMACHUS. Then how can he be said to be injured voluntarily? I'm getting rather in a muddle.

ARISTOTLE. Because it is possible voluntarily to act against one's own wish. We proved long ago that acts due to anger were voluntary.

Now, let us turn our attention to injustice in the particular sense—the injustice which is co-ordinate with cowardice and the other vices—and show that neither in this sense is it possible for a man to be unjust to himself. If we were to grant it, we should have a fine nest of contradictions.

(1) It would then be possible for the same thing to be taken from and given to the same person at the same time. But this is impossible. Therefore justice and injustice necessarily involve two persons.

(2) Again injustice, as we have seen, is something wilful and aggressive. If a man is merely retaliating, he is not held to be unjust. Therefore, if a man could be unjust to himself, he would have to be at once agent and patient, aggressor and victim, so that he would be both before and after himself.

(3) In this case also we should have to admit what we have already disproved, that a man can be injured voluntarily.

(4) Besides there would be injustice without any particular injury. For, if you run through the various concrete forms of injustice, you will find that no man can commit them on himself. No man can be guilty of adultery with his own wife, or commit burglary on his own premises, or steal his own property.

We may consider now, I think, that we have disposed of the proposition that a man can be unjust to himself. We might, of course, have blocked the case by the third argument, which is as fatal in the case of particular as in that of general injustice: but it would have been a pity not to

let the proposition show us some sport before putting the finishing stroke to it.

NICOMACHUS. Well, it's dead now, father, anyhow. I'm afraid you hit it after it was down. But now, to make up for the way in which I was suppressed, I would like to ask a new question. Is it worse to do or to suffer injustice?

ARISTOTLE. They are both bad, my son. To have either more or less than the mean is to violate the conditions of healthy social existence. Nevertheless of the two evils there is no question but that to do injustice is worse than to suffer it. For that argues vice in the soul and calls for moral reprobation—it argues vice, I say, either in the fullest sense or in one approaching it, for you may have the act without the state—whereas to be injured is no sign of vice and calls for no blame.

NICOMACHUS. Does it not prove a man to be a coward?

ARISTOTLE. Not the fact of his being injured. The fact of his not resisting injury under certain circumstances might.

When I say that being injured is the lesser evil of the two, of course I mean essentially and in itself. In its consequences it may entail despair, madness, and death. But these consequences are accidental. Now science confines itself to the essential and can take no account of the accidental. It pronounces a pleurisy a worse evil than a stumble, though the consequences of the latter might be that a man fell and was captured by the enemy, or even met his death. You have drawn me away however from something which I was going on to say, and which I think accounts for the fixed idea people have that a man can be unjust to himself. Though in the strict sense of the term justice cannot be said to subsist between oneself and oneself, yet by metaphor and analogy it may be said to subsist between the several parts of oneself: but not every kind of

justice—only that which holds between a master and his slaves or between a father and his family ; for it is in these relations that the rational part of the soul stands to the irrational. In this metaphorical sense a man can be said to be unjust to himself, since the parts may be forced by one another in violation of their several impulses. The inferior may be considered to have rights against the superior as a subject against his ruler. The higher impulses may tyrannize over the lower and the lower rebel against the higher ; in short, you may have all the play of passion and politics within the city of man's soul, which we see carried out on a larger scale in the state.

Now, before we part, I want to say a few words upon the subject of equity and the equitable man, without which our treatment of justice could hardly be considered to be complete. We have to determine the relation of equity to justice and of the equitable to the just. They appear on inspection to be neither absolutely the same nor yet different in kind. Sometimes we praise equitable conduct and the man who exhibits it : indeed we have got into the way of using the term metaphorically for 'good' in general, showing plainly our opinion that the more equitable a thing is the more good there is about it. On the other hand, on a strictly logical view of the matter, we seem landed in an absurdity when we say that the equitable is praiseworthy, if it be something opposed to the just. For either the just is not best or the equitable is not best, not being just ; or, if both are best, they must be the same. There you have pretty nearly the whole grounds of the difficulty about equitable conduct. The statements are all true in a way and contain no real contradiction. For the equitable is just as being better than justice of a certain sort, but is not better than the just as being something different in kind from it. The just and the equitable then are one and the same, and

yet we can say that, though both are good, the equitable is better. The apparent inconsistency arises from the fact that the equitable indeed is just, but not as being legal justice, but a rectification of legal justice. The reason why the law requires rectification is that law is always universal, whereas there are some subjects on which it is impossible to be correct when speaking universally. In such cases the law has to take what is true generally, or on the average, and speak of it as though it held true universally ; and this it does, being well aware of the error that has thus been allowed to creep in.

NICOMACHUS. Then is law always more or less wrong, father?

ARISTOTLE. It is as right as it can be, my son. The fault does not lie in the law, nor in the lawgiver, but in the nature of the thing, because the matter of all action is necessarily variable. Conduct is not like geometry : it always admits of exceptions. When then the law makes some universal statement, and some case falls under the law to which this universal statement does not apply, it is right for equity to step in to correct the mistakes and deficiencies of law, to say what the lawgiver himself would have said, had he been there present, and to do what, had he known of it, he would have provided for in his legislation. And so, as I said, the equitable is just and yet better than justice of a certain sort, not of course than absolute justice, but better than the error which arises from the universality of statement ; and this we may say is the essence of the equitable, that it is a rectification of law where that fails owing to its universality. This unavoidable shortcoming of law is the reason why all things are not embraced under it : there are some things about which it is impossible to legislate, so that they require a special decree. For, to measure the indefinite, you require an indefinite rule, like the leaden rule of Lesbian

architecture, which is not so rigid but that it adapts itself to the form of the stones, as a bill does to the emergencies of the moment. You will know what I mean, Theophrastus, being a Lesbian.

So much then for the equitable. You can see that it is at once just and better than a kind of justice.

The character also of the equitable man is plain from what has been said. He is one who wills to act in the way we have mentioned, and who does not strain the worst construction of the law, but is content to forego his rights, where he might call in the law to help him. It will never be said in his case that the height of legality is the height of injustice. This is the state of mind which we denominate equity. It is the most refined justice, and not a state of mind different from it.

NICOMACHUS. I like this equitable man, father. Will you not tell us something more about him?

ARISTOTLE. Well, my son, he will pardon the infirmities and frailties of human nature. He will not look so much to the law as to the lawgiver, nor so much to the words of the lawgiver as to his meaning, and not so much at the act as at the intention of the offender, not at the part but at the whole, not at a person's frame of mind at a given moment, but at what it is always or generally. He will remember the good that he has suffered rather than the evil, and the benefits he has received rather than those he has bestowed. He will rather endure to be injured than himself inflict an injury, and will prefer to appeal to reason than to force. He will seek a court of arbitration rather than a court of justice, for the arbitrator looks to equity, but the judge only to law. And this is why an arbitrator was first appointed, in order that equity might flourish among men.

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ATTEMPTS AT TRUTH

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Opinions of the Press

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